



SAPIENTIA – HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY OF TRANSYLVANIA

FACULTY OF TECHNICAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

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IMOLA KATALIN NAGY

***AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE STUDY OF PRAGMATICS***

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OF PRAGMATICS*



SAPIENTIA HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY OF TRANSYLVANIA
FACULTY OF TECHNICAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES, TÂRGU-MUREȘ

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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PREFACE

The volume entitled *An introduction to the study of pragmatics* aims to help students and translators understand the role and importance of pragmatics within the wider system of linguistics. We have wished to debate upon issues connected with speech act theory, the structure of speech acts and the models proposed by Austin and Searle, the different facets of illocutionary acts, presuppositions, deictic elements, implicatures and implied meaning as proposed by Grice's theory of implicatures, the social dimensions and implications of speech acts, the politeness theory and the relationship between politeness and indirectness in English, and the role of context in conveying pragmatic meaning. We have also included a chapter dedicated to the problem of the relationship between pragmatics and translation studies. Our approach presents the most important concepts in the study of pragmatics, alongside with the most recent directions in pragmatic studies.

We have designed this volume into 8 major chapters, each of them being further divided into several subchapters. The titles of the chapters indicate the topic: 1. *Introduction to pragmatics*, 2. *Micropragmatics*, 3. *Speech Act Theory*, 4. *Grice's theory of implicature*, 5. *Macropragmatics. Issues of co-text and context*, 6. *Politeness theory*, 7. *Conversation analysis*, 8. *Pragmatics and translation studies*.

At the beginning of each chapter, we have included a section of key terms and concepts, while at the end of the chapter we listed a sketch of the topic previously dealt with, entitled TO SUM UP. These two – introductory and ending – sections have the purpose of easing the learning process in order to help students operationalize the concepts they are faced with.

Our aim is to make our students more aware of the deep and sophisticated relationship between language usage and other dimensions of human experience, of the tremendous role of linguistic and non-linguistic context, and of the way context influences the role of participants and vice-versa. We ultimately intend to make students understand the complex relationship between knowledge (of a language) and experience (of communication) and language usage, as pragmatics is nothing else than the study of language in use.

INTRODUCTION TO PRAGMATICS

Keywords and concepts: *pragmatics vs. semantics, praxis, pragmatic meaning, linguistics, levels of linguistic organization, sentence, utterance*

1.1. Pragmatics within the system of linguistics

Linguistics is considered the science of language(s), which aims to discover and describe how language works. The different facets of linguistics are generally referred to as levels of linguistic organization (such as the level of phonetics, i.e. the study of the field of pronunciation and sounds).

How many levels of language are there? “Four-level models of language (phonetics/phonology/grammar/semantics) are among the most widely used, but further divisions within and between these levels are often made.” (Crystal, 1996: 82) Within grammar, one can easily distinguish morphology (the study of word structure) and syntax (the study of word sequence within sentences). Within phonology we can recognize the specificities of the study of vowels, consonants and syllables (usually referred to as segmental phonology), and those of the study of prosody and other tones of voice (suprasegmental phonology). Semantics is defined as the study of meaning; the study of vocabulary (or lexicon) is sometimes considered separately from the study of larger meaning patterns (text or discourse levels). Apart from these levels of language functioning that deal with structure, some scholars have defined and identified another level, the so-called *pragmatic level*.

David Crystal (1996) describes six types of grammar, namely:

- descriptive grammar (the description of grammatical constructions that are used in a language, with no evaluative judgment about their standing in society (it investigates and describes a corpus of spoken or written material);
- pedagogical grammar (the so-called *teaching grammars*, grammar books designed for teaching foreign languages);
- prescriptive grammar (a manual laying down rules on the socially correct usage of the language such as *Grammatica Academie*);
- reference grammar (a comprehensive reference book for those who wish to establish grammatical facts, for instance Otto Jespersen’s seven-volume *Modern English Grammar* or Randolph Quirk’s *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*);

– theoretical grammar (which goes beyond the study of individual languages and which intends to determine what constructs are needed in order to do any kind of grammatical analysis);

– traditional grammar (early writings on the study of languages, the works of classical Greek or Roman grammarians, up to the 18th century prescriptive grammarians).

Morphology studies the structure of words: *inflectional morphology* studies the way words vary (or inflect) in order to express grammatical contrasts in sentences (singular/plural, present/past, etc.), while *derivational morphology* studies the principles of word construction, without reference to the grammatical role of the word in the sentence. *Words* can be subdivided into the smallest meaningful units, called *morphemes*, but they also can be grouped into *word classes*. There are eight such word classes: nouns (*dog, car*), pronouns (*he, it, who*), adjectives (*happy, large*), verbs (*go, be, do*), prepositions (*in, on, under*), conjunctions (*and, as, because, if*), adverbs (*sometimes, lately, merrily*), and interjections (*gosh, ouch*). Morphology also deals with grammatical categories: aspect (verbs), case (nouns, pronouns, and adjectives), gender (nouns, verbs, and adjectives), mood (verbs), number (nouns, verbs, and pronouns), person (pronouns, verbs, tense (verbs), and voice (verbs)).¹ There is no strict one-to-one correspondence between a word's form and the meanings conveyed thereby: plurals are not always more than one, *I/we* do not always refer to the person who is speaking, and masculine nouns do not always refer to a male.

Syntax, on the other hand, is the study of the way in which words are organized within sentences (*syntax* comes from the Greek *syntaxis* = arrangement).

Semantics has been defined as the study of meaning in language. Greek philosophers were the first who raised the issue of meaning. From their writings and thoughts, two views emerged: the Plato-inspired *naturalist view*, which said that there was an intrinsic connection between sound and sense, and the *conventionalist view*, based on Aristotle, holding that this connection was purely arbitrary. Among the issues studied by semantics, we should mention meaning, sense, lexeme or lexical unit (the minimal unit of meaning), semantic structure, semantic fields, semantic change, semantic relationships, and semantic features or semantic components (componential analysis).

Pragmatics studies “the factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effects of our choice on others.” (Crystal, 1996: 120) In other words, pragmatics studies what we can do with words, what we do with the language in our social interactions, in the practice (in the *praxis*) of the language. When speaking, people obey (even unconsciously) a lot of social rules and constraints that govern what and how they say (for instance, the fact that they do not tell jokes at funerals). There are norms of formality and politeness that

¹ Note that we refer to languages in general, not only and exclusively to English, where the category of gender is very restricted.

speakers take into consideration in the act of conversation (both written and oral communication forms).

Our selection of sounds, vocabulary, and grammatical constructions is largely influenced by pragmatic factors and constraints, some of which are taught at the early phases of language acquisition. Native speakers of British English, for example, learn at a very young age that it is not allowed to refer to an adult female in her presence with *she*, and they also learn the importance of *please* and *thank you*. Pragmatic distinctions of formality, politeness, or intimacy reflect matters of social class, status, and role. We cite, in this sense, the pragmatic force of distinctions within the pronoun system such as the choice between *tu* and *vous* or even *je* and *moi* in French.

Pragmatic distinctions of politeness may be different in different languages: this becomes obvious when we analyse the frequency of thanking and request expressions: English uses *please* quite often, whereas other languages do not. *Thank you* may mean different things in English and in French, even if the context is similar. For instance, if the question *Would you like some cake?* gets an answer like *thank you*, it means *yes* on the part of an Englishman, but a *merci* would mean a refusal, a *no*, when a Frenchman answers the same question.

1.2. Defining pragmatics

Pragmatics is not necessarily part of language structure; it is rather connected with structural (and even cultural or social) matters. Let us consider a sequence like: *What's up, your majesty?* All the constituents of this are correct, they are listed in dictionaries, yet such a sequence is not permissible and possible from a pragmatic point of view.

Pragmatics is not a science proper; it is rather a collection of theories and ideas. "Pragmatics is not at present a coherent field of study. A large number of factors govern our choice of language in social interactions, and it is not yet clear what they all are, how they are best interrelated, and how best to distinguish them from other recognized areas of linguistic enquiry." (Crystal, 1996: 120)

As W. Koyama puts it in his article *Anthropology and Pragmatics* included in Mey's volume dedicated to the study of pragmatics, "pragmatics concerns, first and foremost, actions and events that necessarily take place in context as actual happenings, that is socio-historically contextualized unique happenings. Such happenings, however, may be seen as tokens of virtual regularities such as action types, event types, or even illocutionary types. Hence, pragmatics may be approached from two different points of departure: either the socio-historic context or the decontextualized regularities. This condition has given rise to the two distinct scientific traditions dealing with 'what we do' (i.e., our praxis): either the social science of actions and events, such as sociology and anthropology, or the logico-

linguistic science of propositionally centered regularities of speech acts. Both of these trends originated in (neo)Kantian philosophy; they may be characterized as the pragmatic and the semantic tradition, respectively.” (Mey, 2009: 16)

The problems pragmatics deals with overlaps issues taken into consideration and analysed by other fields of study. The most important area of overlap concerns the relationship between pragmatics and semantics as both take into account notions like the speaker’s intention, the effects of an utterance on listeners, the beliefs and presuppositions about the world upon which speakers and listeners rely when in interaction. Pragmatics also overlaps with stylistics and sociolinguistics, in the study of the social relationships that exist between the participants of the act of communication, and in the way the extralinguistic setting (the context) influences the choice of expression.

Pragmatics and psycholinguistics investigate factors like the speakers’ attention, memory, personality, i.e. those psychological states and abilities of people that affect and influence their linguistic performance. Finally, we mention the overlap of pragmatics and discourse analysis as both are equally preoccupied with the analysis of conversation: they both utilize linguistic notions like deictic forms, conversational maxims (of quality, of quantity, of relevance, and of manner).

The many definitions given to pragmatics and to its scope can be explained by these overlapping areas of interest. Thus, pragmatics has been defined as “the study of principles and practice, underlying all interactive linguistic performance – this including all aspects of language usage, understanding, and appropriateness.” (Crystal, 1996: 120–121)

Other authors claim that “as a perspective rather than a component of a linguistic theory, pragmatics can purposefully be applied in the investigation of all instances of language use, whether at the level of the individual, the group, the institution, or society as a whole, and whether at the level of the sentence/utterance or in relation to extended discourse ... With its focus on the sentence/utterance level of discourse, micro-pragmatics is concerned primarily with the local constraints of the immediate context such as: deixis and the indexing of personal, temporal, and locative features; reference and the textually directive function of anaphora and cataphora; and word order and the sequencing/clustering of particles and their discourse function to modify illocutionary force, to facilitate the management of conversation, or to highlight salient parts in a stretch of discourse.” (Mey, 2009: 25)

The term *pragmatics* was first used, in its modern sense, by the philosopher Charles Morris in 1938. “The term pragmatics is generally said to date back to the work of the American semiotician and behaviorist Charles Morris and his distinction of the three parts of semiotics: syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics. The foundations for pragmatics as a linguistic discipline are regarded as having been laid by ordinary language philosophers and speech-act theorists such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, John L. Austin, John R. Searle, and H. Paul Grice.” (Mey, 2009: 328)

Charles Morris wanted to define the general shape of a science of signs (named by Morris semiotic); within this semiotic science, Morris made a distinction between *syntactics* (or syntax, i.e. the study of the formal relation of signs to one another), *semantics* (the study of the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable, their designata), and finally *pragmatics*, defined as “the study of the relation of signs to interpreters”. (Levinson, 1997: 1) Morris gave pragmatics and its scope a very wide definition; later on, the term pragmatics became subject to a narrowing of scope.

Another philosopher and logician, R. Carnap gave the following definition: “If in an investigation explicit reference is made to the speaker, or, to put it in more general terms, to the user of the language, then we assign it to the field of pragmatics ... if we abstract from the user of the language and analyse only the expressions and their designate, we are in the field of semantics. And, finally, if we abstract from the designate also and analyze only the relations between the expressions, we are in logical syntax.” (Levinson, 1997: 3) In the late 1960s, Carnap’s definition knew a revival in the movement known as *generative semantics*. A more recent usage of the term pragmatics was launched by the Anglo-American linguists. Among the definitions given by this movement, Levinson offers the following: “pragmatics is the study of those principles that will account for why a certain set of sentences are anomalous, or not possible utterances.” (Levinson, 1997: 6) Such impossible utterances might be: *Come there please!*; *Fred’s children are hippies, and he has no children*; *As everyone knows, the Earth please revolves around the sun*, etc.

Another definition states that pragmatics “is the study of language from a functional perspective, that is, that it attempts to explain facets of linguistic structure by reference to non-linguistic pressures and causes. But such a definition, or scope, for pragmatics would fail to distinguish linguistic pragmatics from many other disciplines interested in functional approaches to language, including psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics.” (Levinson, 1997: 7) If we invoke Chomsky’s distinction between (linguistic) *competence* and *performance*, we might conclude that pragmatics is mainly concerned with performance principles of language usage. In 1963, Katz and Fodor said that a theory of pragmatics (named by them a theory of *setting selection*) was essentially preoccupied with the disambiguation of sentences by contexts in which they were uttered (“Pragmatic theories ... do nothing to explicate the structure of linguistic constructions or grammatical properties and relations ... They explicate the reasoning of speakers and hearers in working out the correlation in a context of a sentence token with a proposition. In this respect, a pragmatic theory is part of performance.” (Katz, 1977: 19; qtd. by Levinson, 1997: 8)

Levinson points out that there is no perfect and complete definition of pragmatics as it is concerned with the context-dependent aspects of language structure, but also principles of language usage and understanding beyond the

linguistics structure. Among the potentially acceptable definitions, Levinson proposes the following one: “pragmatics is the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized, or encoded in the structure of a language ... Such a scope for pragmatics would include the study of deixis, including honorifics and the like, and probably the study of presupposition and speech acts.” (Levinson, 1997: 9)

George Yule defines pragmatics as “the study of the relationships between linguistic forms and the users of those forms.... The advantage of studying language via pragmatics is that one can talk about people’s intended meanings, their assumptions, their purposes or goals, and the kinds of actions (for example requests) that they are performing when they speak.” (Yule, 1996: 4)

According to Allot, pragmatics is concerned with “how (a) speakers can mean various things by their utterances, and (b) hearers can grasp what was meant.” (Allot, 2010: 116)

In the 1990s, a new domain of pragmatics emerged, the so-called applied pragmatics, i.e. “the use of a pragmatic perspective to analyze situations in which a conversation has not been successful, and to suggest solutions.” (Pavelescu, 2003: 47) In 1986, Deborah Tannen published her *That’s not what I meant!* and in 1990 her *You just don’t understand me* was launched. These two books focus on the different strategies and expectations that people use when talking to each other. Lucia Pavelescu mentions some of the everyday notions that can be subject to such an analysis, (notions like nagging, accusing, or being at cross-purposes). She also quotes one of Tanner’s anecdotes meant to highlight how, within a small fragment of conversation, communication fails due to some pragmatic reasons: “*Loreine frequently compliments Sidney and thanks him for doing things such as cleaning up the kitchen and doing the laundry. Instead of appreciating the praise, Sidney resents it. It makes me feel like you’re demanding that I do it all the time, he explains...* In all these examples, men complained that their independence and freedom were being encroached on. Their early warning system is geared to detect signs that they are being told what to do ... Such comments surprise and puzzle women, whose early warning systems are geared to detect a different menace ... If a man struggles to be strong, a woman struggles to keep the community strong.” (Pavelescu, 2003: 47) Issues of applied pragmatics can arise in business communication, advertising, in all the fields where successful communication is essential.

1.3. Pragmatics versus semantics

Semantics is a branch of linguistics devoted to the study of meaning. Pragmatics is the study of all those aspects of meaning not captured in semantic theory.

1. Semantic meaning is truth-conditional, whereas in pragmatics there are felicity conditions.

Example: To be true, the sentence *Sam is a man* has to fulfil the following conditions:

- a. Sam is a person.
- b. Sam is an adult.
- c. Sam is a male.
- d. Sam is an adult male person.

Semantics is interested in the conditions that make the sentence true.

In pragmatics, the utterance *I promise to be back early* means a promise on condition a future action is involved: *I'll come back early*. In this case, we are interested in those conditions which make the promise *felicitous*, i.e., be a promise and not a threat, for instance.

2. In semantics, meaning is a dyadic relation: “X means Y”; in pragmatics, meaning is a triadic relation: “Speaker means Y by X.”

Example:

Shall we see that film tonight?

I have a headache.

The speaker means *no* (Y) by saying *I have a headache* (X) (explanation and examples from Coposescu, 2004: 5).

3. In semantics we refer to sentence meaning; in pragmatics we refer to utterance meaning. Sentence is an abstract theoretical entity defined within a theory of grammar, while an utterance is the issuance of the sentence in an actual context. While sentences can be perfectly analysed morpho-syntactically, utterances may contain additional elements that can be difficult to analyse: utterances may be elliptical, may contain sentence-fragments, false-starts, etc. Utterance should be defined as the sentence plus the context in which the sentence was uttered.

As Allot puts it, “in its narrowest sense, an utterance is a use of a particular bit of language in certain circumstances, by a particular speaker, on a particular occasion: that is, ‘a pairing of a sentence and a context’ in Bar-Hillel’s famous phrase. As a technical term in pragmatics, ‘utterance’ is usually used in a slightly broader sense to also cover non-linguistic gestures used to communicate. In Grice’s work, utterances can be taken as those things which possess speaker meaning.” (Allot, 2010: 192)

Sentence meaning is predictable from the meaning of the lexicon items and grammatical features of the sentence. Utterance meaning consists of the meaning of the sentence plus considerations of the intentions of the Speaker (the speaker may intend to refuse the invitation to go to the film) and the interpretation of the Hearer (the Hearer may interpret the utterance as a refusal or not), determined by context and background knowledge.

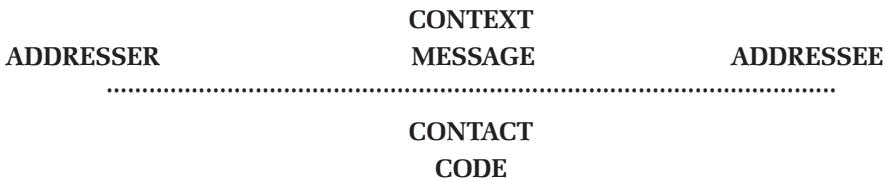
4. Semantics deals with meaning out of context; pragmatics deals with meaning in context.

There are three categories of context referred to in the literature:

- a. setting: the particular moment and place at which the speaker utters the utterance, and the particular time and place at which the hearer hears or reads it;
- b. the world referred to in the utterance: that is, the world evoked in it;
- c. the textual environment, the co-text, or the neighbouring text that surrounds the utterance.

Meaning, as a defining feature of what pragmatics is concerned with, is not a stable counterpart to linguistic form; it is dynamically generated in the process of communication.

Jakobson's model of human communication:



(Mey, 2009: 90)

Pragmatics serves as a point of convergence between interdisciplinary fields of investigation and the components of language resources. (Coposescu, 2004: 9)

TO SUM UP

Pragmatics is:

- the science of language in relation to its users
- the study of language in use

Pragmatics is the study of those aspects of meaning which are not captured by semantics:

- meaning is a triadic relation: speaker means Y by X
- utterance meaning consists of the meaning of the sentence plus considerations of the intentions of the speaker and the interpretation of the hearer, determined by context and background knowledge
- for an utterance to mean something, it has to fulfil certain felicity conditions. (Coposescu, 2004: 10)

MICROPRAGMATICS

The term *micropragmatics* (used by some pragmaticians such as Mey, 1993, apud Copesescu, 2004) refers to the pragmatics of lesser units of human language use, such as questions of deixis, anaphora, implicature or speech acts, i.e. micropragmatic contexts.

Mey proposes (Mey, 1993: 89), as an attempt to analyse the pragmatic implications of our way of naming the world around us, the story of the knock on the door, followed by the question *Who is it?* and the implicit, highly ambiguous answer *It's me*. Such an utterance is always necessarily true, but totally uninformative to establish a speaker's identity and to take consequent action (i.e. to open or not to open the door). There is no known referent for *me* by virtue of the linguistic expression alone; thus we need additional information to establish the identity of *me*. We have to take into consideration that people basically use language to refer to persons or things, directly or indirectly. In the first case (direct reference), we have names available that lead us to persons or things. In the second case (indirect reference), we need to have make use of other, linguistic and/or non-linguistic strategies in order to establish the correct reference (such as asking questions like *Who's talking?*).

2.1. Deixis

Keywords and concepts: *deixis, person/time/space/social/discourse deixis, deictic elements/devices, indexicals, proximal, distal, honorifics*

2.1.1. Introduction. Approaches to the problem of deixis

The term *deixis* is borrowed from the Greek word meaning *point* or *indicate*, and it designates the way in which the relationship between language and context is reflected in the structures of the language themselves. Deixis describes words, expressions whose reference relies on the context of utterance. According to George Yule, deixis is "one of the most basic things that we do with utterances ... pointing via language." (Yule, 1996: 9) The prototypical or focal exemplars of deixis are: the use of demonstratives, 1st and 2nd person pronouns, tense, specific time and place adverbs (here, now), and several other grammatical features tied directly to the circumstances of utterance. In fact, deictic expressions (indexicals)

are the first linguistic elements children learn: they learn how to indicate people via person deixis (*me, you*), how to show location through spatial deixis (*here, there*), or how to refer to time by using temporal deixis (*now, then*).

Practically, deixis refers to the ways in which languages grammaticalize (or encode) features of the context of utterance or speech event. “Deixis is generally understood to be the encoding of the spatio-temporal context and subjective experience of the encoder in an utterance. Terms such as *I, here, now, and this* – the so-called *pure deictic terms* – are heavily context-dependent and represent a kind of cognitive centre of orientation for the speaker. What, for instance, is *here* for me, may be *there* for you.” (Mey, 2009: 178)

Deixis emphasizes the idea that the interpretation of utterances is always a matter of interpreting and/or analysing the context of the utterance. One essential truth that one should keep in mind when raising the issue of deixis is that deictical facts constantly remind us that natural languages were primarily designed for face-to-face interaction. The importance of deictic information is best revealed when we try to interpret utterances but lack deictic information. A very good example in this respect is the typical notice on doors: *I’ll be back in an hour*, or a message in a bottle found in the sea or on the beach, saying that: *Meet me here a week from now on ...*. The interpretation of these utterances is almost impossible because we do not have the deictic information telling when the notice/message was written.

Deixis belongs to the field of pragmatics “because it directly concerns the relationship between the structure of languages and the contexts in which they are used. But all such categorizations are theory-dependent, and on the view that we have adopted for convenience, namely that pragmatics concerns those aspects of meaning and language structure that cannot be captured in a truth-conditional semantics, the grammatical category of deixis will probably be found to straddle the semantics/pragmatics border.” (Levinson, 1997: 55)

Essentially, deixis is a form of referring that is tied to the speaker’s context. In other words, deixis is “a technical term used in semantics and pragmatics for linguistic items that encode sensitivity to context and for uses of linguistic items that involve this kind of sensitivity.” (Allot, 2010: 54)

Languages usually show at least a two-referential distinction in their deictic system (things or places close and far from the speaker). In this sense, in English, there are two basic types of deictic elements: *proximal terms* meaning “near, close to the speaker” (*this, here, now*) and *distal terms* meaning “away, far from the speaker” (*that, there, then*). The speaker’s location is also called *deictic centre*.

2.1.2. Philosophical approaches to the problem of deixis

When talking about deixis, philosophers prefer to use the term *indexical expressions*, or *indexicals*, while linguists prefer the term *deixis*. The problem of deixis, from a philosophical perspective, refers to the context-dependency of

utterances, i.e. to those sentences that contain expressions, the truth value of which depends on certain facts about the context of utterance. Philosophical interest in expressions that have a context-dependent property (demonstratives, 1st and 2nd person pronouns, morphemes indicating tense) has always been remarkable. Let us consider the sentence: *Letizia de Ramolino was the mother of Napoleon*. The truth of this sentence depends on historical facts and not on who utters the sentence. Once the sentence changes and the subject is *I*, the sentence becomes: *I am the mother of Napoleon*. In this case, in order to assess the truth value of the sentence, we must take into consideration who the speaker is. Thus, to assess the truth of this latter sentence, we need to know not only historical facts but also details about the context in which *I* was uttered (the identity of the speaker).

Among the most important such problems of deixis and context dependency we mention *I* and *you*, *this/that*, *here/there*, *now/then*, etc.

Some examples in this sense:

This is an 18th century map.

Susan is in love with that man over there.

It is now 12 o'clock.

In all these sentences, the context-dependency can be traced to specific deictic expressions or indexicals. "Sentences that contain such expressions, and whose truth values therefore depend on certain facts about the context of the utterance (identity of speakers, addressees, indicated objects, places and times, etc.), are not of course in any way special or peculiar." (Levinson, 1997: 56)

2.1.3. Descriptive approaches to the problem of deixis

The problem of deictic expressions has been studied by linguists like Bühler, Frei, Fillmore, Lyons, and many others. From a descriptive viewpoint, the traditional deixis categories are *person*, *place*, and *time*, to which other categories like *discourse (or text) deixis* or *social deixis* have been added more recently.

"*Person deixis* concerns the encoding of the role of participants in the speech event in which the utterance in question is delivered." (Levinson, 1997: 62) The 1st person category is the grammaticalization of the speaker's reference to himself, 2nd person encodes the speaker's reference to one/more addressees, while 3rd person is the encoding of reference to persons/entities which are not speakers or addressees of the utterance. Such roles are encoded in the language with the help of pronouns.

Place deixis refers to the encoding of spatial location relative to the location of the participants in the speech event. There is (at least) a proximal and a distal (non-proximal) deixis, linguistically encoded by demonstratives (*this* and *that*) or deictic adverbs of place (*here* and *there*).

Time deixis refers to the encoding of temporal points and spans relative to the time at which an utterance was delivered. Time deixis is usually rendered

by deictic adverbs of time (*now, then, yesterday, this year*), and, even more importantly, by verbal tenses.

Discourse deixis “has to do with the encoding of reference to portions of the unfolding discourse in which the utterance (which includes the text referring expression) is located.” (Levinson, 1997: 62) A special sub-case of discourse deixis is *token-reflexivity* (i.e. referring to themselves). *This* and *that* are instances of discourse deixis, but only the first one is token-reflexive.

Social deixis is the encoding of social distinctions relative to participant roles, aspects of social relationship between speaker and addressee, speaker and/or referent. Among the social deictic expressions, we mention the honorifics, the choices between different pronouns, summons, forms or vocatives, titles of address, etc.

“It is essential to distinguish different kinds of usage of deictic expression. Indeed, by deictic expression we mean those linguistic units or morphemes that have a deictic usage as basic or central, for most such expressions have non-deictic usages. In addition to deictic vs. non-deictic usages of deictic expressions, we shall need to distinguish distinct kinds of deictic usage ... namely gestural usage and symbolic usage.” (Levinson, 1997: 64–65) *Gestural usages* can be interpreted with reference to a physical monitoring of the speech event. When interpreting the following sentences, besides the usage of the demonstrative pronouns (*this*) or personal pronouns (*he, she*), we must think of some physical indication of the referent (direction, gaze, selecting gesture):

This one is good, but *this* one is bad.

She's not my wife, *she* is. *She* is the maid.

There are few words that can only be used gesturally (like *voici* in French).

Symbolic usages of deictic terms do not require a physical monitoring of the speech event for their interpretation, but they rather make reference to the basic spatio-temporal parameters of it, to the contextual co-ordinates available to participants prior the utterance.

Here are some examples of gestural deictic usages:

You, you, but not you, are dismissed.

This leg hurts (but this doesn't).

Go out now, but now!

Not this one, you stupid, but this one.

Let's move this from there to there.

Here are some examples of symbolic deictic usages:

What did you say?

This town is beautiful.

Let's go now rather than never.

Hello, is John there?

John lives opposite.

Here are some examples of non-deictic usages:

*You can never tell what lies ahead.
 The other day I met this girl whom you know...
 Now, let's talk about...
 Well, she did this and that...
 He lives opposite me.
 There we go....*

2.1.4. Person deixis

Person deixis is directly reflected in the grammatical categories of person. Yet, it is necessary to take a look at the way participant roles are grammaticalized in different languages. It is important to note that the speaker/spokesperson can be distinct from the source of utterance, the recipient can be different from the target, and, similarly, hearers/ bystanders can be different from addressees or targets.

The basic grammatical distinctions are the categories of first, second, and third person. As J. Lyons puts it in his *Semantics* (1990), the first person means speaker inclusion (+S), the second person means addressee inclusion (+A), while the third person means speaker and addressee exclusion (-S, -A). The pronominal systems of some languages exhibit fifteen basic pronouns by imposing distinctions based on plurality, gender, and so on. In many languages, there are two first person plurals (*we-inclusive-of-addressee* and *we-exclusive-of-addressee*). This distinction is not present in the English language directly but rather indirectly: for instance, the contraction of *let us* to *let's* is felicitous only if *us* means *we-inclusive-of-addressee*. In Japanese, pronouns are different with respect to the sex of the speaker, the social status of referent, and the degree of intimacy with the referent.

Thus, person deixis operates on this three-part division (*I/you/he, she, it*), imposing the deictic categories of *speaker*, *addressee*, and *others*. An example of social contract encoded, grammaticalized within person deixis, is the distinction between forms used for a familiar vs. a non-familiar addressee: *tu vs. vous* in French, *du vs. Sie* in German, *te vs. Ön* in Hungarian, or *tu vs. Dumneavoastră* in Romanian.

Another way of encoding social deixis is through verbal inflections. In French, for instance, verbs take different endings for polite second person singular and plural forms.

In addition to pronouns and predicates, person or participant role can be marked by other means such as kinship terms, titles or even with proper names (there are two different sets, one for use in address, for vocatives in second person usage, and the other for use in reference, for referring to people in third person role like the Romanian *Ioane/Ion*).

Another aspect that should be mentioned is that when there is no face-to-face communication, language can encode person deixis for self-introduction in

a very distinct way. One can say in a face-to-face speech event that *I'm X*, but when on the telephone, for instance, *This is X* must be used.

Third person pronouns are distal forms in person deixis. When one uses a third person form in contexts where second person would be possible, this kind of choice imposes a distance, and such strategies can be used for expressing irony or accusations (*Would his highness like something to eat? Somebody forgot to clean up his room!*).

2.1.5. Time deixis

In most languages, the bases of measuring (and, thus, expressing) time is the cycles of days and nights, months, seasons, and years. These units are usually taken as measures (including the deictic centre) or calendrically. Time deixis interacts with these calendrical and non-calendrical units.

Time deixis also makes reference to participant roles. In this sense, *now* can be interpreted as “the time at which the speaker is producing the utterance that contains *now*”. We have to distinguish between the moment of utterance, i.e. *coding time* (CT), and the moment of reception, i.e. *receiving time* (RT). When CT and RT are identical, the situation is called *deictic simultaneity*. Difficulties arise when RT is not identical to CT (writing/reading written messages, making/watching media programmes etc). In such situations, the deictic centre is either the speaker and CT, or the addressee and RT. Languages that have overtaken the Latin epistolary tenses still use past tense for events including CT and pluperfect (past perfect in English, *plus-que-parfait* in French, or *mai mult ca perfect* in Romanian) to refer to events prior to CT.

A pragmatic interpretation of *now* shows that this adverb means “the pragmatically given span including CT, where the span may be the instant associated with the production of the morpheme itself ... or the perhaps interminable period” (Levinson, 1997: 74), as in *I am writing this sentence now* or *I'm working on my thesis now*.

Then contrasts with *now*, and it means *not now*, which allows usages both in past and future. Terms like *today*, *tomorrow*, *yesterday* presuppose a division of time into diurnal spans (*today* = the diurnal span that includes CT, *yesterday* = the diurnal span that is prior to CT, *tomorrow* = the diurnal span that follows CT). Adverbials such as *this year* are more complex and ambiguous in their interpretation. *This year* can refer to *from January 1 to January 1, including CT* or *to the time span of 365 days starting from the day of CT*.

English has only two basic tense forms: the present and the past. The present is the proximal form, while the past is the distal form. That is why events that happened in the past or events that are treated as highly unlikely (imposing thus a distal treatment of it) are referred to with the past tense (*I could swim when I was six; I could be on holiday if I had some money*). That is why we use past tense in

conditional clauses which refer to events presented as not being close to the present reality of the speaker: *If I had some money, If I was richer...*). Past tense does not refer in these cases to past events but rather to events that are deictically distant from the speaker's situation at present. Thus, in temporal deixis, the distal form (*that*, past tense, etc.) is used to communicate not only distance from the current moment or the present time but also distance from current facts or the present reality. The same distancing applies to the backshift that occurs in reported speech.

There are various other deictic elements in language that are connected with time deixis. Among these, we should mention greetings, which are highly time restricted (*Good morning, Good afternoon* can only be used in the morning/afternoon); in the case of *Good night*, we have an interaction of time deixis and discourse deixis (it can be used at night, but also as a parting phrase). (Levinson, 1997: 79)

2.1.6. Place deixis

It is also called *space deixis* and it refers to the specification of locations relative to anchorage points within the speech event. There are two main types of referring to objects deictically:

- Relative to other objects, fixed reference points (*the school is 50 metres from the bus stop*);
- Relative to the location of participants at CT (*the school is 50 metres from here*).

In English, there are some purely deictic words like the adverbs *here, there* or the demonstrative pronouns *this, that*. In a sentence like *I'm spending my holidays here*, the adverb is symbolically used with the meaning of *a unit of space including the location of the speaker at CT*. The gestural usage of the same adverb in the sentence *Put it here* refers to *the space proximal to the speaker's location at CT, including the point indicated by gestures*.

There can mean *distal from the speaker's location at CT*, but it can also mean *proximal to the addressee at RT* (*What is the weather like there?*).

The demonstrative pronouns *this* and *that* are neatly organized in a proximal-distal dichotomist dimension: *this* = *the object in an area close to the speaker's location at the moment of CT*, whereas *that* = *the object beyond/outside the speaker's location at the moment of CT*. The situation is made even clearer with languages which apply this difference in compounds like the Hungarian *ittthon/otthon* or the French *ceci/cela*.

When the speaker uses *this* for *that* for the sake of empathic communication, or vice versa, *that* replaces *this* to suggest emotional distancing, and we have to deal with what Lyons calls *empathetic deixis*. (Lyons, 1990)

In contexts such as *This is it!* or *That's it!*, the spatial difference between the two adverbials is neutralized.

Another issue that must be mentioned within an analysis of space deixis is the usage of some motion verbs that have some in-built deictic elements like the English *come* and *go*, the Hungarian *jönni/menni*, the Romanian *a veni/a se duce*, or the French *aller/venir*. In English, the listener's point of view is taken into consideration (*I am coming to you*).

A sentence like *she is coming* will be interpreted as *she is moving towards the speaker's location at the moment of CT*, while *she is going* means *she is moving away from the speaker's location at the moment of CT*. This interpretation is not valid if the subject is *I*, as *I'm coming* cannot be decoded as *the speaker is moving towards the speaker's location at the moment of CT*. *I'm coming* means *the speaker is moving towards the location of the addressee at the moment of CT*. Thus, *come* stands for *movement towards either the location of the speaker or towards the location of the addressee, at the moment of CT*. There are other interpretations that rely on the participants' normative location or home-based location (such as in *He came over a couple of times, but she was never there*).

If Modern English uses only two adverbs to distinguish between proximal and distal location (*here* and *there*), we should mention that earlier versions of the language or some of its dialects display a larger set of distinctions: *yonder* (still in use) = more distant from the speaker, *hither* = to this place, *thence* = from that place.

Another aspect to be mentioned is that a truly pragmatic basis of space deixis is psychological distance. Even if physically close objects are usually treated by the speaker as psychologically close, and physically distant ones will be treated as psychologically distant, there are contexts in which speakers refer to objects that are physically close by the adverb *that* (and not *this*), to emphasize psychological distancing. For instance, if somebody says *I don't like that* after sniffing a perfume, it means that the term *that* is invested with an extra-meaning in the context, i.e. disliking the odour of the perfume.

2.1.7. Discourse deixis

Discourse deixis or *text deixis* refers to the usage of “expressions within some utterance to refer to some portion of discourse that contains that utterance (including the utterance itself)”. (Levinson, 1997: 85) Discourse deixis includes those deictic signals of a text through which an utterance signals its relation to the surrounding text as a whole. Time-deictic words (*last*, *next*) can be used to refer to portions of discourse (*in the last paragraph*, *in the next chapter*). We can also use space deictic elements like the demonstratives *this* and *that* to refer to forthcoming, respectively preceding portions of the text: *I suppose you've never heard this ...* (story that follows) or *That was the most awful thing I've ever heard* (so far).

There is a long list of English terms (usually linking words) that indicate the relationship between an utterance and the prior discourse: *but*, *therefore*,

in conclusion, still, however, actually, besides, well, all in all, so, etc. Discourse deixis markers are all those word order changes that are used in English (emphasis, inversion). We can distinguish anaphoric deixis from cataphoric deixis. Anaphoric deixis is backward pointing, and is the norm in English texts (demonstrative pronouns and other deictic elements like *such, said, similar, the same, etc.*). Cataphoric deixis is forward pointing like the following examples: *the following, certain, some, this, these, several (the speaker raised some objections, let me show you these..., let me say this...)*.

2.1.8. Social deixis

Social deixis refers to those aspects of utterances that reflect, establish or are determined by the social context and reality in which the speech event is performed. We have in mind those aspects of language structure that encode the participants' social identity and social relationships. Among the most important elements of social deixis are the polite pronouns, titles of address, the so-called *honorifics*, expressions referring to rank and respect or which indicate higher status, etc. Most languages have encoded such relational deictic information that can be manifested in the following directions:

- Relation between the speaker and referent (referent honorifics): the use of elevated terms like residence (for home), dine (for eat), lady (for woman), steed (for horse); T/V pronouns, etc.;

- Relation between the speaker and addressee (addressee honorifics): polite pronouns, titles of address, on the one hand, and dishonorifics or intimacy markers on the other;

- Relation between the speaker and bystanders (bystander or audience honorifics): totemic relations, the presence of tabooed persons;

- Relation between the speaker and setting (formality levels): formal and informal.¹

Yule talks about the so-called *T/V distinction* (from the French *tu/vous*), an obvious form of social deictic choice. The choice of one form or another (familiar vs. non-familiar) will communicate something about the speaker's view of his relationship with the addressee. According to Yule, "in those social contexts where individuals typically mark distinctions between the social status of the speaker and addressee, the higher, the older, and the more powerful will tend to use the 'tu' version to a lower, younger and less powerful addressee, and be addressed by the 'vous' form in return. When social change is taking place, as for example in modern Spain, where a young businesswoman (higher economic status) is talking to her older cleaning woman (lower economic status), how do they address each other? I am told that the age distinction remains more

1 http://ifla.uni-stuttgart.de/institut/mitarbeiter/jilka/teaching/Pragmatics/p2_deixis.pdf

powerful than the economic distinction and the older woman uses ‘tú’ and the younger uses ‘Usted.’” (Yule, 1996: 10–11)

The T/V pronouns may originally have indicated the number used for plural forms, but today they show different levels of formality (tu = more familiar, vous – more polite).

In English, this was shown historically by the contrast between *you* and *thou/thee*. Today, the *thou* form still exists in some dialects, along with other familiar pronoun forms (youse – Liverpool, you-all – southern USA). V pronouns establish a register of politeness and deference. T/V pronouns may also mark status: T forms are used with equals or inferiors, while V forms apply to superiors. T forms can be assumed to express solidarity or intimacy. T pronouns can often be found in Shakespeare’s texts as markers of social status and situation. A king is *your majesty* or *you*, whereas a peasant is addressed as *thou*.

Thou is also to be found in frozen languages² (Quakers or Pennsylvania Amish groups), in orders, and/or in prayers. Despite the fact that *thou* is less formal than the more often used *you*, due to this archaic usage, people often treat it as more formal and courteous than *you*.

We distinguish *relational honorifics* from *absolute honorifics*, forms that are reserved for certain (authorized) speakers or addressees or recipients. Thus, in Japan, the 1st person pronoun is reserved for the Japanese emperor; *Your Majesty* is reserved for the ruling queen/king of the UK; *His Royal Highness* (felség, fenség) is used exclusively for the members of the royal family; *Your Excellency* refers to high-rank politicians, church people, and ambassadors; *The Honourable Gentleman* refers to members of the British Parliament.

In English, status and attitude to social position can be expressed by titles and names. Among the most frequent titles we mention *Professor*, *Dr.*, *Sir*, *Father*, *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Miss*, etc. Some of these can be abbreviated in writing but not in oral communication. Using first names only (Mary, John) can signal intimacy. Using last name for family names only can mean two things: either lack of respect or a widely accepted norm (like in public schools, in the army, etc). If somebody uses title and last name (TLN) and the other first name (FN) only, difference in status might be inferred (in such cases, the FN speaker should invite the inferior to use FN in response).

In schools, teachers use first names or first name and last name alike when they wish to reprimand. They should be addressed by title (T) like *Sir* or title and last name (TLN) like *Miss Marple*. Woman teachers are addressed with *Miss*, even when it is known that they are married.

When greeting, avoidance of address is acceptable in English (*Good morning*, and not necessarily *Good morning Mr. X*), but is considered rude and impolite in French (*Bonsoir*; *Monsieur* sounds polite, while *Bonsoir* alone could be offending).

2 According to: <http://www.shunsley.eril.net/armoore>

TO SUM UP

– Deixis = the way speakers and/or listeners rely on the context in constructing and interpreting the meaning of utterances.

Examples:

Who is he? Person deixis

He is ill. Present tense – time deixis

Will you come to the cinema? – deictic verb (implying future/the fact that I/ we will be there).

– Deictic devices or indexicals commit a speaker to set up a frame of reference around himself.

– Every language carries an implicit division of space around the speaker (space deixis), a division of time relative to CT (time deixis), and a system of naming the participants involved in the speech event (person deixis).

– Proximal terms (*here, now, this*); distal terms (*there, then, that*); deictic centre: it is the place (here) where the speaker (I) is at the moment of speaking (now).

– Person deixis:

– participants (*I, you, we* – inclusive and exclusive we):

– familiar and polite form of distinctions

– non-participants (*he, she, they*): bystanders

– special cases: *Would his highness like something to eat?* (irony); *Somebody didn't clean up the mess* (accusation); *We clean up after ourselves* (serious politeness).

– Social deixis (honorifics): concerns those aspects of sentences which reflect, establish, or are determined by certain realities of the social situation in which the speech act occurs. What can be encoded in social deixis are: social identity of participants (in-groupness, out-groupness), social relationships of participants (respect, rank).

– Space deixis: *here/there*; deictic verbs (*come, go*); manipulation of space, psychological distance (pushing away verbally).

– Time deixis: *now, then (yesterday, tomorrow, tonight, next week)*; the use of tenses (proximal = present tense, distal = past); reported speech (backshift), if-clauses (past = tense to mark that something is unlikely or impossible, therefore distant, not possible for the present of utterance).

– Discourse deixis: the use of expressions within some utterances to refer to some portion of the discourse (surrounding text that contains the utterance): in *the last* chapter, in *the previous* paragraph, Listen to *this* story, *That* was very interesting, I bought *the* book. (*This* = reference to a forthcoming portion of the discourse, *that* = reference to a preceding portion of the discourse, *the* = reference either to a forthcoming or to a preceding portion of the discourse).

2.2. Implicit meaning. Presupposition and entailment

Keywords and concepts: *implicit meaning, presupposition, types of presupposition, presupposition-triggers, entailment, constancy under negation*

Pragmatics looks at language as a *form of action*. When one says something, one also performs an action (such as making requests, asking for information, apologizing, ordering, welcoming, etc). Within the field of pragmatics, we deal with meanings that go beyond the literal, explicit meaning. Thus, implicit meaning becomes a topic of investigation. According to Coposescu, there are three things involved here: the impossibility of complete explicitness, conventional linguistic means to cope with this impossibility, and strategies to exploit it. (Coposescu, 2004: 21) This chapter deals with the problem of presuppositions and entailments as carriers of implicit meaning.

“The unexpressed information carried along by an utterance is called *background information (common knowledge or common ground)*. Because of the impossibility of full explicitness, and the need to further explain different aspects of this general background information, in order to achieve a more complete, if not full, understanding of any instance of language use, the term *explicature* has been introduced.” (Coposescu, 2004: 22) For example, an utterance like *The office is closed on Monday* requires as *explicature* a further specification of which office is the one that we refer to, whether *closed* means closed for the public or also for the people working there (i.e. the building will be completely empty or the ban is imposed only on potential clients, and we have to specify which Monday is referred to in the notice. Thus, as Coposescu (2004. 22) puts it, explicatures are simply representations of implicit forms of meaning.

Languages usually provide an important number of conventionalized ways of conveying implicit meaning. These linguistic units are tools for linking explicit content to relevant aspects of background information. What people say carries a whole world of unexpressed information, and that it would be impossible to communicate with complete explicitness. Presuppositions are one form of conveying aspects of implicit meaning, and we say that speakers hold a number of presuppositions when producing utterances.

2.2.1. Presuppositions

Presupposition used to be a focal area of interest in pragmatic research, especially during the period of 1969–1976. More recent approaches tend to neglect the problem of presupposition. As George Yule puts it, a presupposition is “something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance. Speakers, not sentences, have presuppositions.” (Yule, 1996: 25) Thus, we can identify some of the potentially assumed information that would be associated

with the following utterance: *Mary's brother bought three horses*, by presupposing that a person called Mary exists and that she has a brother. Not to mention that we can also presuppose that this brother has a lot of money which he spends on horses. *Presupposition is an implicit assumption about the world or background belief in relation with an utterance whose truth is taken for granted.* Here are some examples of presuppositions: *Do you want to come again?* presupposes that *You have already been here* or *John no longer smokes* means that *John once smoked*.

Presupposition is considered a relationship between two propositions. The symbol for marking presupposition is “>>”. One basic feature of presuppositions is *constancy under negation*, i.e. that they remain constant under negation.

Let us take the following example:

Mary's dog is cute, which presupposes (>>) that *Mary has a dog*. If we consider the negation of our first sentence, that is, *Mary's dog is not cute*, then we reach the conclusion that this second sentence (the negation of the first) presupposes the very same sentence: *Mary has a dog*. This means that the presupposition of a statement will remain constant even when the statement is negated.

The same applies to the following sentences:

Everybody knows he is rich. (>> He is rich.)

Everybody doesn't know he is rich. (>> He is rich.)

They realized that she was right. (>> She was right.)

They did not realize that she was right. (>> She was right.)

His younger brother is blue-eyed. (>> He has a younger brother.)

His younger brother is not blue-eyed. (>> He has a younger brother.)

My husband likes fish. (>> I have a husband.)

My husband doesn't like fish. (>> I have a husband.)

2.2.2. Types of presupposition

According to Yule (1996: 27), there are linguistic forms as indicators of potential presuppositions, which can only become actual presuppositions in contexts with the speakers.

The existential presuppositions

The existential presuppositions presuppose the existence, at a given place and/or time, of entities in a real world. The possessive constructions in examples like *Mary's brother*, *Mary's dog* are associated with a presupposition of existence. A construction like *your car* presupposes the fact that you have a car. Not only possessives but also all kinds of noun phrases are linked to existential presuppositions. By using constructions like *the head of the family*, *the Queen of Egypt*, *the dog*, *the boy next door*, etc., we assume the existence of entities like

the head of the family, the Queen of Egypt, etc. The presuppositions of existence are often triggered by definite noun phrases: *My sister lives in London (>> I have a sister.)*.

The factive presuppositions

The factive presuppositions are linked to a number of factive verbs (that state a fact), such as *know*, *realize*, *regret*, or phrases involving *be aware*, *be glad*, *be sorry*, *be odd*, etc. Here are some examples of factive presuppositions:

She didn't realize he was ill. (>>He was ill.)

We regret telling him. (>> We told him.)

I wasn't aware that she was married. (>>She was married.)

It isn't odd that he left early. (>> He left early.)

I am glad that it's over. (>>It's over.) (Yule, 1996: 28–29)

The lexical presuppositions

The lexical presuppositions refer to situations in which the use of one form with its asserted meaning is conventionally interpreted with the presupposition that another (non-asserted) meaning is understood. When saying that *somebody managed/didn't manage to do something*, we assert that the person *succeeded/didn't succeed* (asserted meaning) and we also presuppose that *the person tried to do something* (non-asserted meaning).

Here are some examples of words that involve lexical presupposition: *manage* (presupposing *tried*), *stop* (presupposing *did something earlier*), *start* (presupposing *didn't do or had a rest earlier*), *again* (presupposing *did it before*).

He managed to repair the car. (>>He tried hard.)

She stopped smoking. (>>She was a smoker before/she used to smoke.)

She is pregnant again. (>> She was pregnant before.)

The structural presuppositions

The structural presuppositions refer to certain sentence structures that have been analysed as conventionally and regularly presupposing that part of the structure is already assumed to be true. When using such structural presuppositions, speakers treat information as presupposed (assumed to be true); thus the listeners accept them as true. Among the most typical examples of structural presuppositions we mention *wh-questions*: structural presuppositions state that the information after the *wh*-word (*when*, *where*, *why*, etc.) is already treated as known and true:

When did she come? (>> She came.)

Where did she buy that book? (>> She bought that book.)

Such structural presupposition might function as very subtle manipulative devices, i.e. ways of making information that the speaker believes appear to be what the listener should believe. An interesting and typical example in this sense is the one given by Yule: “Let’s say that you were standing at an intersection one evening. You didn’t notice whether the traffic signal had turned to red before a car went through the intersection. The car was immediately involved in a crash. You were witness to the crash and later you are asked the question *How fast was the car going when it ran the red light?* If you answer the question as asked ... and estimate the speed of the car, then you would appear to be accepting the truth of the presupposition (i.e. >> *the car ran the red light*).” (Yule, 1996: 29)

All the above mentioned presuppositions have been assumed to be true.

The non-factive presuppositions, on the other hand, are supposed not to be true. They are associated with verbs like *dream*, *imagine*, *pretend*, which are used with the presupposition that what follows them is not true. Here are some examples in this sense:

I dreamt I was old. (>> I was not old.)

Let’s imagine we are on holiday! (>> We are not on holiday.)

They pretend to be sleeping. (>> They are not sleeping.)

Such contexts of non-factive presuppositions are the ones that were mentioned within the chapter about deixis when talking about the use of past tense to refer to unlikely or hypothetical situations. Such structures can lead to a *counter-factual presupposition*, meaning that what is presupposed is not only not true, but it is the opposite of what is true (it is contrary to facts, thus counter-factual): *If we were friends, we would go together (>> We are not friends.)*

Those presupposition-generating linguistic items like the possessives for the existential presuppositions, the verbs *know*, *realize*, *regret* for factive presuppositions, *manage*, *stop*, *start*, *again* for lexical presupposition, etc. are called *presupposition-triggers*. Levinson offers a selection of such presupposition-triggers in his *Pragmatics* (1997: 181–184):

I. Definite descriptions:

John saw/didn’t see *the man with two heads*. (>> There is a man with two heads.)

II. Factive verbs (that state a fact): *regret*, *realize*, *be aware that*, *be odd*.

Martha regrets/does not regret drinking John’s beer. (>> Martha drank John’s beer.)

Frankenstein was/was not aware that Dracula was there. (>> Dracula was there.)

John realized/didn’t realize that he was in debt. (>> John was in debt.)

It was/was not odd how proud he was. (>> He was proud.)

+ some other factive predicates like: *know*, *be sorry that*, *be proud that*, *be indifferent that*, *be glad that*, *be sad that*.

III. Implicative verbs (that imply another action, presuppose another action): *manage, forget, happen to, plan, intend, avoid*, etc.

John managed/didn't manage to open the door (>> John tried to open the door – the intention of opening the door is implied).

John forgot/didn't forget to lock the door (>> John intended to lock the door – the intention of locking the door is implied).

IV. Change of state verbs (mostly connected with the beginning or ending of something): *start, begin, stop, continue, finish, carry on, cease, take, leave, enter, come, go, arrive*, etc.

John stopped/didn't stop smoking. (>> John had been smoking.)

John began/didn't begin smoking. (>> John had not been smoking.)

He continued/didn't continue to tell his lies. (>> He had been telling lies.)

V. Iteratives (implying a repetition of some kind): *again, anymore, any longer, another time, for the 2nd/3rd time, return, come back, restore, repeat*, etc.

He came/didn't come again. (>> He came before.)

He returned/didn't return here. (>> He was here before.)

VI. Verbs of judging: *accuse, criticize*

She accused/didn't accuse him of robbery. (>> She thinks robbery is bad.)

They criticized her for leaving too early. (>> She left early.)

VII. Temporal clauses:

Before John was born, Mary didn't know how to raise children. (>> John was born.)

Since my grandmother's death, I have not eaten anything tasty. (>> My grandmother died.)

VIII. Cleft sentences:

It was John that ate the cookies. (>> Someone ate the cookies.)

What I lost was something precious. (>> I lost something.)

IX. Counterfactual conditionals:

If he had not failed that exam, he would be a student by now. (>> He had failed the exam.)

If Hannibal had only had twelve more elephants, the Romance languages would/would not exist this day. (>> Hannibal didn't have twelve more elephants.)

If only the notice had been written in English! (>> The notice was not written in English.)

2.2.3. Entailments

If a presupposition is something that is assumed to be implied within the sentence prior to making an utterance, an entailment is something that logically follows from what is asserted in the sentence. Both presuppositions

and entailments are considered to belong to the speaker, not to the sentence. Entailments are symbolized by “ \Vdash ”.

Yule proposes a number of logical consequences, i.e. entailments, for a sentence like: *Rover chased three squirrels*:

Something chased three squirrels.

Rover did something to three squirrels.

Rover chased three of something.

Something happened. (Yule, 1996: 33)

The speaker indicates, through tone of voice, intonation, or stress, the order of importance of these background entailments, and this interpretation via utterance will indicate which will become the foreground entailment (the main assumption of the speaker in producing an utterance).

Other examples of entailments:

The anarchist assassinated the emperor (\Vdash the emperor died).

They raised the prices (\Vdash the prices rose).

She got a degree in philosophy (\Vdash she got a degree).

Levinson quotes one of P. F. Strawson's ideas on checking presuppositions. This latter linguist has provided us with an operational test for identifying presuppositions: take a sentence, negate it, and see what inference survives, what inference is shared by both the positive and the negative sentence. (Levinson, 1997: 178) Let us consider the sentence: *John managed to stop in time*, from which we can infer two variants:

John stopped in time.

John tried to stop in time.

In order to check which utterance is the correct presupposition of *John managed to stop in time*, we take the negation of this sentence (negation of the main verb/topmost clause in a complex sentence): *John didn't manage to stop in time*. From this, we can infer that *John tried to stop in time*, but we cannot infer that *John stopped in time*. Thus, we conclude that, based on the negation test, the correct presupposition for *John managed to stop in time* is *John tried to stop in time*, which is also the presupposition of *John didn't manage to stop in time*.

Negation can alter a sentence's entailments, but it does not alter the presupposition.

TO SUM UP

Presupposition: potentially assumed information that would be associated with the utterances.

Types of presupposition:

- Existential: *the dog* (presupposition: the dog exists)
- Factive: *I regret coming* (presupposition: I've come)
- Non-factive: *He pretended to be sober* (presupposition: he was not sober)
- Lexical: *He managed to finish* (presupposition: he tried to finish)
- Structural: *When did they leave?* (presupposition: they left)
- Counterfactual: *If I weren't tired* (presupposition: I am tired).

Entailment: something that logically follows from what is asserted in the sentence.

- constancy under negation is an important feature of presuppositions
- there is a list of presupposition-triggers.

SPEECH ACT THEORY

Keywords and concepts: *speech act theory, speech as act, locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary, declarations, representatives, expressives, directives, commissives, co-operative principle and the Gricean conversational maxims, direct and indirect speech acts, felicity conditions*

Speech act theory, along with presupposition and implicature, remains one of the central phenomena that pragmatic researches account for. Speech acts have aroused a widespread interest, and have led to the writing of an enormous literature on the subject. Psychology views speech acts as essential phases for language acquisition in general. Anthropologists have tried to find some account of the nature of rituals and magic spells, while literary critics have approached speech act theory for the sake of explaining and understanding textual subtleties and genres. Philosophical readings consider speech acts' potential applications to the status of ethical statements. Linguists have dealt with speech acts as a set of notions that are applicable to domains like syntax or second-language learning.

The issues of truth and falsity are central to the philosophical approach to speech acts. In the 1930s, logical positivism became fashionable; this movement stated that if a sentence could not be, at least in principle, verified (tested for truth/falsity), it was strictly speaking meaningless. It was in the same period when concern with verifiability and distrust of inaccuracies and vacuities of ordinary language were paramount that Austin launched his theory of speech acts, which wanted to elucidate the total speech act in the total speech situation.

“Before Austin, the foundations for pragmatics had been laid by thinkers who stressed that ...

- Signs are not only used for the expression of thought, but have various other functions.

- Signs have not only an intellectual but also an affective function.

- Sign use has basically three functions: representation, expression, and appeal. Signs can only be understood in the context of the situation in which they are used.

- Speaking is a goal-directed action.

- Signs are instruments used in the act of speech, and their use has practical effects and consequences.

- Signs are mainly used to influence others.

- Signs only function in dialogue and conversation; the reciprocity between speaker and hearer is important.

- Signs are used for the coordination of human behavior.
- Some signs are indexically linked to reality and the language users. Rather late in the development of pragmatics are these ideas:
 - Certain speech acts are self-referential.
 - In saying something we are doing something.” (Mey, 2009: 334)

The process of decoding and the understanding of a linguistic message require the understanding of its syntactic structure and lexical items, but it is obvious that we do not operate only with this literal input to our understanding. We can recognize, for instance, when a writer (speaker) has produced a perfectly grammatical sentence from which we can derive a literal interpretation, but which we cannot understand due to the simple fact that we need more information. To illustrate this, Liliana Copesescu has borrowed (from Levinson, 1980: 8) and proposed the following example, where the conjunction *because* is not only used to connect two clauses in a complex sentence, but it is also used to introduce the reason for asking a question: *What’s the time, because I’ve got to go out at eight?*

“We can safely say that (cf. Levinson, 1980: 8), in the example above, the structure of the sentence is not that normally associated with *because* as a logical connector. In other words, our understanding of the example is based not on an interpretation of the sentence on the page but on our assumption that a reason is being expressed for an action performed in speaking.” (Copesescu, 2004: 31)

3.1. Language as act

We use the language to make things happen: we ask others to pass the salt, to open the door, to forgive us, we make appointments, and we order food. Speech acts include a very wide variety of linguistic acts like asking for a glass of water, promising to come home early, ordering a pizza, threatening to turn off the TV while the football game is on, but people also use speech acts for awarding a Nobel Prize or sentencing someone to life imprisonment, baptizing a baby or declaring war. All these are called speech acts, and speech act theory explains the way these acts work. Some of them rely on common sense and state what is obvious (felicity conditions). Speech acts also state that saying the words is not actually accomplishing the act. “Inferring the function of what is said by considering its form and context is an ability which is essential for successful communication. Speech Act Theory provides us with a means of establishing the function of what is being said. The theory was developed from the basic belief that language is used *to perform actions*. Thus, its fundamental insights focus on how meaning and action are related to language. This is a position in which we shall be able to examine the structure of discourse both in terms of surface relations of form and underlying relations of functions and acts.” (Copesescu, 2004: 31)

Speech act is, in fact, a technical term, largely used in linguistics and the philosophy of language, including such acts as promising, ordering, greeting, warning, inviting, congratulating, etc. Early treatments of the problem of speech acts can be found in the works of some church fathers, scholastic philosophers, in the context of sacramental theology, as well as Thomas Reid and Charles Sanders Peirce.

The first complete Speech Act Theory was formulated by the philosopher John Austin in a series of lectures later collected in a book: *How to Do Things with Words* (1962). Austin's doctrine relied on speech events in terms of *locutionary* (> saying a sentence with a specific meaning), *illocutionary* (> the intent the speaker has while saying the sentence), and *perlocutionary* (> the result achieved by the sentence) acts.

These ideas were further developed by the philosopher John Searle (1967, 1975), who completed them and presented them more systematically. Searle talks about *declarations* (> which change the world via utterance: verbal formulas for baptizing, sentencing, marrying, etc.), *representatives* (> which represent a state of affairs: statements, descriptions, assertions), *expressives* (> which express an attitude of the speaker: thanks, apologizes, welcomes), *directives* (> which intend to give the listener orders, requests, instructions), and *commissives* (> which intend to commit the speaker to some future action: promises, threats, offers).

As Coposescu (2004: 32) mentions, Austin's almost equally influential pupil, H. P. Grice, and a group of other philosophers working at Oxford came to be known as *ordinary language philosophers* (i.e. philosophers of ordinary language). Grice's contribution is connected with the so-called co-operative principle and the Gricean conversational maxims of quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. These ordinary language philosophers reacted against the view of such Oxford-based philosophers as Russell, who believed that everyday language was rather imperfect, deficient, ambiguous, imprecise, and contradictory, and who wanted to refine language, remove its deficiencies, and create an ideal language. Instead, "the response of Austin and his group was to observe that ordinary people manage to communicate extremely efficiently with language just the way it is." (Coposescu, 2004: 32)

More recently, George Yule has written a lot on the problem of speech acts, especially on the problem of politeness strategies in speech acts (which he divides into *direct* and *indirect speech acts*). He defines speech acts as "actions performed via utterances which, in English, are commonly given more specific labels, such as apology, complaint, compliment, invitation, promise, or request." (Yule, 1996: 47)

Another linguist who has had an important contribution to the development of speech act studies is Geoffrey Leech; he introduces his own terms (he calls representatives *assertives* and directives *impositives*, and he also gives a set of politeness maxims (tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, sympathy maxim).

Speech is viewed as an action, in the sense that according to all these linguists the meaning of a sentence is constructed in use while in action. On the one hand, we as speakers have to know how to ask questions, make suggestions and wishes, how to greet, thank or warn others. On the other hand, we as hearers need to learn to understand, comprehend, to decode those utterances in their semantic and pragmatic complexity and entirety, thus to be able to react accordingly.

3.2. Felicity conditions

Felicity conditions are the conditions that are necessary for a speech act to be successful. The term *felicity* comes from the Latin word *felix*, meaning *happy*. For an utterance to perform a certain act, some appropriate conditions have to be fulfilled. These are called *felicity conditions*. Speech act theory defines such underlying conditions that must hold for an utterance to be used to realize a certain speech act. In other words, felicity conditions are needed for the success or achievement of a performative. Allot defines felicity conditions as “the conditions that must be satisfied for a speech act to come off successfully. If they are not satisfied, then the act is either a *misfire* (i.e. the action is not really accomplished) or an *abuse* (the action is accomplished, but insincerely). For example, if the person at a wedding ceremony who says ‘I now pronounce you man and wife’ is not qualified to officiate, then no marriage has taken place: a misfire. But if the bride and groom only got married to meet the terms of a will and have no intention to live together as a married couple, then the marriage does come into existence but is an abuse.” (Allot, 2010: 76)

Felicity conditions are of three kinds: *preparatory conditions*, *conditions for execution*, and *sincerity conditions*.¹ *Preparatory conditions* refer to the status or the authority of the speaker to perform a speech act. Declaring war, baptizing a child, solemnizing marriages, dissolving a state’s parliament, cautioning a player, or sentencing a convicted criminal can be done only by certain people who are qualified to perform such tasks. The situation of the utterance is also important: declaring war jokingly, in a private conversation, will not open belligerent actions, a wedding scene on stage or on the screen will not force participants to obey the rules of wedlock.

Conditions for execution might assume an exaggerated importance, as everyday life is not so ceremonial or ritual-based as we might believe. When knighting somebody in the UK, the monarch traditionally touches the recipient of the honour on both shoulders with the flat side of a sword-blade. When cautioning a player, a referee may symbolically display a yellow card. All these

1 <http://www.shunsley.eril.net/armoore/2001:5>, Moore’s taxonomy relies on John Austin’s felicity condition types.

belong to an inventory of gesture aids that help communication, but the words simply uttered, without the support of the physical gesture, will validate the act.

Sincerity conditions refer to the condition that speakers must intend what they say in the speech event. In case of apologizing, promising, the sincerity of the speaker cannot be verified, nor can the amount of time the apologetic attitude will last or the promise will be kept. In the case of oaths, the sincerity conditions may be later checked and reinforced with the help of witnesses.

According to Yule (1996: 50–51), there are five types of felicity conditions: *general conditions* (understanding the language, not play-acting, not being non-sensical), *content conditions* (promises and warnings relate to the future, promises involve future act of the speaker, etc.), *preparatory conditions* (when promising, we promise future beneficial actions, but when warning the speaker has in mind a future non-beneficial act), *sincerity conditions* (speakers intend to do what they say in the utterance, for instance a promise is felicitous only if the speaker really intends to carry out the action), and *essential condition* (which implies a change of attitude; for instance, when promising, I change my attitude from non-obligation to obligation). “In everyday contexts among ordinary people, there are preconditions on speech acts. These are called *general conditions* on the participants, for example, that they can understand the language being used... There are also the so-called *content conditions*. For example, for a promise, the content of the utterance must be about a future event.” (Yule, 1996: 50–51) The *preparatory conditions* for a promise require first that the event will not happen by itself and second that the event will have a beneficial effect. Related to these conditions is the *sincerity condition* that, for a promise, the speaker genuinely intends to carry out the future action. Finally, there is the *essential condition*, which covers the fact that by the act of uttering a promise I thereby intend to create an obligation to carry out the action as promised. In other words, the utterance changes the state from non-obligation to obligation. “This essential condition thus combines with a specification of what must be in the utterance content, the context, and the speaker’s intentions, in order for a specific speech act to be appropriately (felicitously) performed.” Yule (1996: 51) A sentence like *I sentence you to ten years in prison* will be infelicitous if it is not uttered by a specific person in a special context (a judge in a courtroom). The utterance *Can you give me a lift?* is felicitous only if the hearer has a vehicle and is able to drive it somewhere, and if the speaker has a reason for the request, i.e. he wishes to get somewhere.

Here is another example of the felicity conditions required by the act of *ordering* (they are not detailed here in types of conditions) (Cook, 1989: 36; qtd. by Coposescu, 2004: 36–37):

1. the sender believes the action should be done;
2. the receiver has the ability to do the action;
3. the receiver has the obligation to do the action;
4. the sender has the right to tell the receiver to do the action.

If any one of these conditions is not fulfilled, the utterance will not function as an order. If the conditions do hold, then any reference by the sender to the action will be perceived as an order, even if it is implicitly made.

Cook (1989: 37) illustrates how a sergeant, speaking to the private, can utter any of the following, and they will be perceived as an order:

I think your boots need cleaning, Jones. (Condition 1)

I'm bloody sure you can get your boots cleaner than that, Jones! (Condition 2)

You're supposed to come on to parade with clean boots, Jones! (Condition 3)

It's my job to see you've got cleaner boots than this! (Condition 4)

The private, for his part, may try to challenge the felicity conditions invoked, and, if he succeeds, he will take away the status of *order* from the utterance:

Don't you think having a well-oiled rifle is more important?

I've been scrubbing all morning and they won't come any cleaner.

I didn't see that in the standing orders, sergeant.

The Captain told me it was all right. (Cook, 1989: 36; qtd. by Coposescu, 2004: 36)

N. B. In the army, the power relations are clear, and the rights and obligations of the participants firmly established that these comments are not likely to go unpunished. It rarely happens, comments Coposescu (2004: 37), that explicit ordering and challenging take place.

The efficiency of speech acts is directly linked with the extent to which they satisfy the so-called felicity conditions. "Speech acts are successful only if they satisfy several criteria, known as felicity conditions." (Crystal, 1996: 121) For instance, the preparatory conditions are supposed to be right, i.e. the person performing the speech act has to have the authority to do so. This becomes evident especially with verbs like *to arrest*, *to fine*, *to baptize*, but it becomes weaker with verbs of the type: *promise*, *thank*, *apologize*, etc.

Speech acts also have to be executed in a correct manner: correctness refers to the procedures that must be followed, to the tone of voice that should be adequate to the given situation.

Sincerity conditions refer to the fact that speech acts have to be performed in a sincere manner. "Ordinary people automatically accept these conditions when they communicate, and they depart from them only for very special reasons." (Crystal, 1996: 121) An utterance like *Will you shut the door* fulfils the felicity conditions and becomes, therefore, appropriate if: the door is open, the speaker has his own reason for asking and last, but not least, the hearer can perform the action (is able to do it or is in the position to do it). If one of the felicity conditions does not obtain, then we are dealing with special cases like joking, being sarcastic, expressing irony, etc.

3.3. Austin's Speech Act Theory. Declarations and performatives

The British philosopher John Langshaw Austin (1911–1960) was the first to approach the issue of speech acts, i.e. the large variety of functions performed by utterances as part of interpersonal communication. His revolutionary idea was that utterances often do not (simply) convey information, but are rather equivalent to actions. In his *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin noted that some ordinary language declarative sentences are not apparently used with any intention of making true or false statements. Such sentences are not used just to say things (i.e. describe a certain state of affairs), but rather to actively do things. Utterances like *I bet you a dollar it will rain tonight; I hereby name this ship Queen Mary; I apologize; I object; I sentence you to ten years of hard labour; I give my word; I warn you that trespassers will be prosecuted; I promise to do that* automatically induce some changes in the psychological or social reality: somebody is apologized only after, and not before the utterance like *I apologize* is performed; the ship is referred to by the name *Queen Mary* only after the act of naming is completed.

Such utterances are called by Austin *performatives*. Performatives are not true or false, as the reply to *I name this ship Queen Mary* cannot be *That's not true*. Austin's theory demolishes the view that considers truth-conditions central to language understanding. He contrasted these peculiar sentences, the so-called performatives, to statements that convey information, which he named *constatives*.

A performative “is an utterance that does something other than describing a state of affairs.... Performatives stand opposed to constatives, which are utterances that just describe states of affairs.” (Allot, 2010: 137)

3.3.1. The beginnings of speech act theory

If J. L. Austin was the British philosopher who is still regarded the founder of speech act theory, then his pupil, John Rogers Searle, was the one who reformulated Austin's ideas. His main books are *Speech acts* (1969), *Expression and meaning* (1979), and *Intentionality* (1983).

The starting point of speech act theory “was Austin's observation (dating back to the 1940s) that there are two essentially different types of utterances: utterances that say how things are (or say what is the matter) and utterances that, merely by being made, bring about something (a ‘new reality’). Austin called the former type ‘constative’ utterances (*The book is on the table*), and the latter type ‘performative’ utterances (*I baptize you Charles*). Whereas constative utterances are (primarily) judged on their truth/falsity, performative utterances are judged on their felicity/infelicity: their (non)success depends not on what the world is like (precisely because they bring about a new fact) but on felicity

conditions such as: appropriate context, authority and sincerity of the speaker, and the existence of certain (cultural) conventions. This distinction, which is the starting point of the William James Lectures given at Harvard University in 1955 (on 'Words and Deeds'), posthumously published as *How to Do Things with Words*, was then questioned by Austin himself, and replaced, in the course of the lectures, with a larger view on types of utterances, coupled with (semantic-pragmatic) types of verbs and with types of communicative strategies and effects. The final distinction is then one between acts (it would be better to speak of features of linguistic acts, or of power potentials or forces of acts): Austin speaks of locutionary act (act of saying something, with a particular sense and reference), illocutionary act (performing an act – such as warning or accusing – in saying something), and perlocutionary act (the act – such as frightening or offending the interlocutor – achieved by saying something). As different people may react differently (some are frightened when being warned, others not), the nexus between the perlocutionary force (as yielding an effect in the hearer) and the two other forces is of a non-conventional nature. Austin did not organize these ideas into a systematic theory, nor did he live long enough to answer the objections soon made to the published version of his lectures, which shows the evolution in his approach of 'words and deeds' and ends with a number of open questions. Thus, it was all the more important that Searle turned Austin's gradually revised approach into a comprehensive speech act theory." (Mey, 2009: 28)

Alan Cruse defines speech acts as follows: "Communication is not just a matter of expressing propositions. A 'naked' proposition ... cannot communicate anything at all. To communicate, we must express propositions with a particular illocutionary force, and in so doing we perform particular kinds of action such as stating, promising, warning, and so on, which have come to be called speech acts." (Cruse, 2011: 365)

Thus, actions performed via utterances are called *speech acts*. Circumstances surrounding utterances and including other utterances are called *speech events*. The nature of the speech event determines the interpretation of an utterance in many ways as performing a particular speech act. Thus, an utterance like *This tea is really cold* can be interpreted as a complaint or as a praise. Austin also suggested that unlike constatives, performatives cannot simply be true or false, yet they can go wrong. He set up a catalogue of the ways they can go wrong (or be unhappy, unfelicitous), and developed the concept of *felicity conditions*, to which we have already referred to. He considers that if we take an utterance like *I christen this ship the Imperial Flagship Mao*, the naming of the ship cannot succeed in the following cases: if the ship has already been given another name, I am not the appointed name-giver, there are no witnesses, bottles of champagne, etc. This set of institutional arrangements and inner conditions must be involved for an utterance to be felicitous. The conditions Austin established for performatives to be felicitous fall into three categories, in his view:

1. a. There must be a conventional procedure having a conventional effect and b. the circumstances and persons must be appropriate, as specified in the procedure.

2. The procedure must be executed a. correctly and b. completely.

3. Often, a. the persons must have the requisite thoughts, feelings, and intentions as specified in the procedure and b. if consequent conduct is specified, then the relevant parties must do so (Pavelescu, 2003: 58).

Austin's first felicity condition later became the preparatory condition, his second category of conditions turned into execution conditions, and the third into sincerity conditions. Performatives could be defined as speech acts of special kind where the utterance of the right words by the right person in the right situation and place effectively accomplishes the social act. Whether the speaker has the social or legal standing to perform the act depends on a set of conditions that go beyond the mere speaking of words, called by Austin felicity conditions. Andrew Moore offers a series of examples from different spheres of human activity, where performatives are found at work. The categories are quite loose; many performatives belong to more than one category:

- universities and schools: conferring degrees, rustivating, excluding students;

- the church: baptizing, confirming, marrying, exorcism, excommunication, combination (cursing);

- governance and civic life: crowning of monarchs, dissolution of Parliament, passing legislation, awarding honours, ennobling, decorating;

- the law: enacting or enforcing of various judgments, passing sentence, swearing oaths;

- the army: signing on, giving an order to attack, open or retreat fire;

- sports: cautioning or sending off players, appealing for a dismissal;

- business: hiring, firing, establishing a verbal contract, naming a ship;

- gaming: placing a bet, raising the stakes in poker.²

The test for checking performatives is the so-called *hereby test*, which implies that in order to check whether a speech act is a performative or not, we should insert the word *hereby* between the subject and the verb. If the resulting sentence makes sense, then the speech act can be considered performative. The *hereby test* was proposed but later rejected by J. L. Austin "for distinguishing between performative and constative utterances. Inserting the word 'hereby' into many performative utterances is felicitous, but inserting it into certain constatives produces very odd results:

I hereby pronounce you man and wife.

We hereby inform you that your account is closed.

Notice is hereby given that shoplifters will be prosecuted.

2 <http://www.shunsley.eril.net/armoore/2001:5>

It is hereby resolved that the board will be dissolved.

?? I hereby play the saxophone.

?? We hereby go to work on the train." (Allot, 2010: 86)

Austin's speech act theory also isolates three basic senses in which saying something means doing something, and hence three types of speech acts that are simultaneously performed: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. As David Crystal puts it, "in speech act analysis we study the effect of utterances on the behavior of the speaker and hearer, using a threefold distinction." (Crystal, 1996: 121)

Locutionary act = we recognize the bare fact that a communicative act takes place. A locutionary act actually means the *performance of an utterance*: the actual utterance and its ostensible meaning, comprising the verbal, syntactic and semantic aspects of any meaningful utterance.

Illocutionary act = we look at the speech act as a result of the *intent* of the speaker making an utterance, i.e. the cases when *saying* means *doing*, such as betting, promising, warning, welcoming, etc. An illocutionary act refers to the semantic *illocutionary force* of the utterance, thus to its real, intended meaning. This is also known as the *illocutionary force of an utterance*.

Perlocutionary act = we look at the particular *effect* of the speaker's utterance *on the listener*, who may feel amused, persuaded, warned, etc. Perlocutionary act: refers to its actual effect, such as persuading, convincing, scaring, enlightening, inspiring, or otherwise getting someone to do or realize something, whether intended or not. This is also known as the *perlocutionary effect* of an utterance.

"It is important to appreciate that the illocutionary force of an utterance and its perlocutionary effect may not coincide. If I warn you against a particular course of action, you may or may not heed my warning." (Crystal, 1996: 121) There are thousands of possible illocutionary acts, they have been classified into several subtypes, yet such classifications are difficult to make as speakers' intentions may sometimes be unclear or meanings may be difficult to distinguish.

It is the second kind, the illocutionary act, that is the focus of Austin (and later Searle's) interest. The term speech act has become, according to Levinson, to designate or "to refer exclusively to that kind of act." (Levinson, 1997: 236) Levinson also proposes an example for making the distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. An utterance like *Shoot her!* has, in various circumstances, the illocutionary force of ordering, urging, and advising the addressee to shoot her, but the perlocutionary effect of persuading, forcing, or frightening the addressee into shooting her. "Similarly, the utterance *You can't do that* may have the illocutionary force of protesting, but the perlocutionary effects of checking the addressee's action, or bringing him to senses, or simply annoying him." (Levinson, 1997: 237)

The locutionary act refers to the production of a meaningful linguistic expression. But people do not usually produce utterances without any purpose

in mind, as “we form an utterance with some kind of function in mind. This is the second dimension, or the illocutionary act. The illocutionary act is performed via the communicative force of an utterance ... generally known as the illocutionary force of the utterance ... We do not, of course, simply create an utterance with a function without intending to have an effect. Depending on the circumstances, you will utter *I've just made some coffee* on the assumption that the hearer will recognize the effect you intended (for example, to account for a wonderful smell or to get the hearer to drink some coffee). This is also generally known as the perlocutionary effect.” (Yule, 1996: 48–49)

Speakers can assume that the intended illocutionary force will be recognized by the hearer by considering two things: felicity conditions (previously dealt with) and the IFIDs, or the Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices. There are two main categories of *Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices*: the explicit and the implicit IFIDs (Yule, 1996).

1. Explicit IFIDs include:

- the so-called performative verbs (*warn, promise, bet, ask, tell, suggest*);
- 1st person, simple present: *I warn (you); I suggest (that you)...*;
- the *hereby* speech acts: *I hereby warn you...; I hereby promise you, You are hereby charged with forgery* (in this latter case, hereby is not inserted between the subject and the verb);
- imperative forms: *Come up and see me some time.* or *Passengers are requested to tighten seatbelts during take-off.*

2. Implicit (primary) IFIDs: word order, stress, intonation, lowered voice quality:

You are going! (I tell you... = a command)

You're going? (I request information about...)

Are you going? (I ask you if...)

An explicit performative is “a performative utterance that uses a verb that names the act that is being performed by the utterance. Performatives that are not explicit are called primary (or sometimes implicit) performatives.” (Allot, 2010: 73)

3.3.2. Illocutionary acts. Discussion

In his *How to Do Things with Words*, J. L. Austin observes that there are many uses of language which have the linguistic appearance of fact-stating but are really quite different. Explicit performatives like *You're fired* and *I quit* are not used to make mere statements.³ We can distinguish sentences, considered in abstraction from their use, and the acts that speakers perform in using them. We can distinguish what sentences mean from what speakers mean in using them.

3 <http://userwww.sfsu.edu/kbach/Spch.Prag.htm>

Austin developed a systematic, though largely taxonomic theory of language use, i.e. speech act theory. Austin's main arguments have had a notable follow-up work in the writings of Searle, while Paul Herbert Grice later developed a conception of meaning which made a distinction between what linguistic expressions mean (sentence meaning) and what speakers mean in using them (utterance meaning).

Pragmatic phenomena generally involve information that is generated, or at least made relevant, by the acts of language usage. For Austin, what the speaker does through uttering a sentence creates social realities within certain social contexts. For example, using an explicit performative to say *I now pronounce you man and wife* in the context of a wedding, in which one marrying two people is to create a social reality, i.e., in this case, a married couple. Austin focused on illocutionary acts, maintaining that here we might find the *force* of a statement and demonstrate its performative nature. For example, to say something like *Don't play with scissors* has the force of a warning when spoken in a certain context. This utterance may be stated in an explicitly performative way, e.g., *I warn you, don't play with scissors*. This statement is neither true nor false; instead, it creates a warning. By hearing the statement, and understanding it as a warning, the listener is warned.

Austin believed that studying words or sentences (locutionary acts) outside of a social context tells us little about communication (illocutionary acts) or its effect on an audience (perlocutionary acts). One can apologize by saying *I apologize*, promise by saying *I promise*, and thank someone by saying *Thank you*. These are examples of explicit performative utterances, statements in form, but not in fact, as they do not state or convey information. This role of giving information is fulfilled by constatives. Performatives are utterances whereby we make explicit what we are doing. So, Austin let the distinction between *constative* and *performative* utterances be gradually replaced by the distinction between *locutionary* and *illocutionary* acts. He included assertions, predictions, etc. (he retained the term *constative* for them) along with promises, requests, etc., among illocutionary acts. His later nomenclature recognized that illocutionary acts need not be performed explicitly – you do not have to use *I suggest ...* to make a suggestion or *I apologize ...* to apologize.⁴

An interesting type of illocutionary speech act is that performed in the utterance of what Austin calls performatives, typical instances of which are *I nominate John to be President*, *I sentence you to ten years' imprisonment*, or *I promise to pay you back*. In these typical, rather explicit cases of performative sentences, the action that the sentence describes – nominating, sentencing, promising – is performed by the utterance of the sentence itself.

Here are some other examples of illocutionary sentences:

– Greeting (in saying *Hi John!*, for instance), apologizing (*Sorry for that!*), describing something (*It is snowing*), asking a question (*Is it snowing?*), making a

4 <http://userwww.sfsu.edu/kbach/Spch.Prag.htm>

request and giving an order (*Could you pass the salt?* and *Drop your weapon or I'll shoot you!*), or making a promise (*I promise I'll give it back*) are typical examples of illocutionary speech acts.

– In saying *Watch out, the ground is slippery*, X performs the speech act of warning Y to be careful.

– In saying *I will try my best to be at home for lunch*, X performs the speech act of promising to be at home in time.

– In saying *Ladies and gentlemen, please give me your attention*, X requests the audience to be quiet.

– In saying *Race with me to that building over there!*, X challenges Y.

– Saying *Don't go into the water* counts as warning you not to go into the water (an illocutionary act), and if you heed my warning I have thereby succeeded in persuading you not to go into the water (a perlocutionary act).⁵

What led Austin to abandon the performative/constative dichotomy? As Mey (2009: 1002) puts it in his *A Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics*, firstly, Austin noticed that like performatives constatives also depend on felicity conditions. Secondly, Austin observed that performatives and constatives may sometimes be impossible to distinguish, even when taking into account the truth-conditional terms. “Austin concluded that constatives are nothing but a special class of performatives, and that the two-way distinction between performatives, as action-performers, and constatives, as truth bearers, can no longer be maintained.

(13a) *France is hexagonal.*

(13b) *The fridge is empty.*

(13c) *New York is sixty miles from where I live.*

(14a) *I hereby state that Da Vinci started to paint Mona Lisa in 1503.*

(14b) *I hereby tell you that the bill is right.*

(14c) *I hereby hypothesize that there is water on Mars.*

Consequently, Austin claimed that all utterances, in addition to meaning whatever they mean, perform specific acts via the specific communicative force of an utterance.” Furthermore, he introduced a threefold distinction among the acts one simultaneously performs when saying something:

(i) Locutionary act: the production of a meaningful linguistic expression.

(ii) Illocutionary act: the action intended to be performed by a speaker in uttering a linguistic expression, by virtue of the conventional force associated with it, either explicitly or implicitly.

(iii) Perlocutionary act: the bringing about of consequences or effects on the audience through the uttering of a linguistic expression, such consequences or effects being special to the circumstances of utterance.” (Mey, 2009: 1002)

This taxonomy of speech acts was inherited by John R. Searle, Austin's student at Oxford, who himself became an influential exponent of speech act

5 Examples adapted from <http://shineesingh.blogspot.ro/p/speech-act.html>

theory. An important implication of taking the speech acts as the basic unit of language analysis is that it allows researchers to see that there is no one-to-one match between function (illocutionary force) and grammatical form (type of clause). For example, one can ask for a glass of water using an interrogative (*Can I have...?*), an imperative (*Give me...!*), or a declarative (*I want....*).⁶ This will lead us to the discussion on direct and indirect speech acts.

3.4. John Searle's taxonomy of speech acts

3.4.1. Searle's speech act categories

The practical problem with any analysis based on identifying explicit performatives is that, in principle, we simply do not know how many performative verbs there are in any language. That is why, some general classification of types of speech acts are usually used. Discovering the number and categories of illocutionary acts is an important part of speech act theory.

J. R. Searle (1975) sets up five basic types of illocutionary speech acts: declarations (e.g., appointing), representatives (e.g. asserting), expressives (e.g. thanking), directives (e.g. requesting), and commissives (e.g. promising). The principle, according to which he differentiates the five categories, concerns the illocutionary force of the act. This is derived from the essential condition of an act (the condition that defines what the act *counts* as). The examples below have been taken from Yule (1996) and Coposescu (2004):

- *Representatives* = the speaker is committed, in varying degrees, to the truth of a proposition, asserting, concluding, like in *affirm, believe, conclude, deny, report*, i.e. speech acts that commit a speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition, e.g. reciting a creed.

Representatives are also called assertives. For example,

- statements of fact (*The earth is round.*)
- assertions (*Pragmatics deals with language in context.; We are running out of time.*)
- descriptions (*It was a rainy day.*).

In using a representative, the speaker makes words fit the world (of belief).

- *Directives* = speech acts that are to cause the hearer to take a particular action, e.g. requesting, questionings, commands, and advice, acts in which the speaker tries to get the hearer to do something, like in *ask, challenge, command, insist, request*. They express what the speaker wants. For example, commands, orders, requests, suggestions, etc., and can be positive or negative:

6 <http://en.wikipedia.org>, <http://pdfsr.com/pdf/speech-act-theory>

- a. *Gimme a cup of tea. Make it strong.*
- b. *Could you lend me a pencil, please?*
- c. *Watch the step.*
- d. *Let's go!*

– *Commissives* = speech acts that commit a speaker to some future action, e.g. promises and oaths, acts in which the speaker is committed, in varying degrees, to a certain course of action, like in *guarantee*, *pledge*, *promise*, *swear*, and *vow*. They express what the speaker intends. For example, promises, threats, offers, refusals, and pledges, and can be performed by the speaker alone or as a member of a group:

- a. *I'll be back.*
- b. *I'm going to get it right next time.*
- c. *We will not do that.*
- d. *Help yourself!*

In using a commissive, the speaker undertakes to make the world fit the words (via the speaker).

– *Expressives* = speech acts that express the speaker's attitudes and emotions towards the proposition, his psychological states, e.g. congratulations, excuses and thanks, apologizing, and welcoming, acts in which the speaker expresses an attitude about a state of affairs, like in *apologize*, *deplore*, *congratulate*, *thank*, *welcome*. For example, expressing pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, sorrow, etc. They can be caused by something the speaker does or the hearer does, but they are about the speaker's experience:

- a. *I'm really sorry.*
- b. *Congratulations!*
- c. *Oh, that's delicious!*

In using expressives, the speaker makes the words fit the world (of feeling).

– *Declarations* = speech acts that change the reality in accord with the proposition of the declaration, e.g. baptisms, pronouncing someone guilty or pronouncing someone husband and wife, excommunication, firing someone from employment, acts in which the speaker alters the external status or condition of an object or situation solely by making the utterance, acts that express an immediate change in the institutional state of affairs: *I resign*, *I baptize*, *You are fired*, *War is hereby declared*.

Priest: I now pronounce you husband and wife.

Referee: You're out.

Jury Foreman: We find the defendant guilty.

In point of felicity conditions, Searle also modifies Austin's categories, and proposes a set of four types of felicity conditions, depending on how they specify propositional content, preparatory preconditions, conditions on sincerity, and the essential condition. (Levinson, 1997: 239) In Searle's view, preparatory conditions concern the real-world prerequisites to each illocutionary

act, propositional content conditions specify restrictions on the content of S' (complement sentence), sincerity conditions state the requisite beliefs, feelings and intentions of the speaker, as appropriate to each kind of action.

Here is a comparison of felicity conditions on requests and warning, as seen by Searle:

Table 1.

Conditions	REQUESTS	WARNINGS
Propositional content	Future action A of H	Future event E
Preparatory	1. S believes H can do A 2. It is not obvious that H would do A without being asked	1. S thinks E will occur and is not in H's interest 2. S thinks it is not obvious to H that E will occur
Sincerity	S wants H to do A	S believes E is not in H's best interest
Essential	Counts as an attempt to get H to do A	Counts as an undertaking that E is not in H's best interest

(Levinson, 1997: 239)

Searle has introduced the notion of an *indirect speech act*, which in his account is meant to be, more particularly, an *indirect illocutionary act*. He describes indirect speech acts as speech acts in which the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and non-linguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer. Indirect speech acts are commonly used to reject proposals and to make requests. For example, a speaker asks *Would you like to meet me for coffee?*, and another replies *I have class*. The second speaker used an indirect speech act to reject the proposal. This is indirect because the literal meaning of *I have class* does not entail a rejection.

In connection with indirect speech acts, Searle introduces the notions of primary and secondary illocutionary acts. The primary illocutionary act is the indirect one, which is not literally performed. The secondary illocutionary act is the direct one, performed in the literal utterance of the sentence. Let us consider the example:

(1) Speaker X: "*We should leave for the show or else we'll be late.*"

(2) Speaker Y: "*I am not ready yet.*"⁷

7 <http://en.wikipedia.org>, <http://pdfsr.com/pdf/speech-act-theory>

Here, the primary illocutionary act is Y's rejection of X's suggestion, and the secondary illocutionary act is Y's statement that she is not ready to leave. By dividing the illocutionary act into two subparts, Searle is able to explain that we can understand two meanings from the same utterance, yet still know which the correct meaning to answer to is.

3.4.2. Direct and indirect speech acts

Some speech acts directly address the hearer, but many others are indirect. We can ask someone to do something, to perform an action in various ways: the most direct way is the use of imperatives (*Shut the window*), which might sound inappropriate in certain contexts: too rude, too abrupt. Alternative constructions take into consideration the hearer's ability to perform the action or the speaker's reason for asking:

I'd be grateful if you'd shut the window

Could you shut the window?

It'd help to have the window shut.

It's getting cold in here.

Shall we keep out the draught?

Now, Jane, what have you forgotten to do?

Brrr! (Crystal, 1996: 121) Crystal says that any of these could function as a request for action, even though they are not clear forms of imperative. These are indirect speech acts.

Sometimes misinterpretation – accidental or deliberate – can occur like in “Teacher: *Johnny, there is some chalk on the floor. Johnny: Yes, sir, there is. Teacher: Well, pick it up, then!*” (Crystal, 1996: 121)

A functional and useful approach to distinguishing types of speech acts can be made on the basis of structure, provided by the three basic sentence types in English which relate to the three general communicative functions:

Table 2.

Utterance	Sentence type	Function
You wear a seat belt.	Declarative	Statement
Do you wear a seat belt?	Interrogative	Question
Wear a seat belt!	Imperative	Command/Request

(Yule, 1996: 54)

As George Yule puts it, there is a relationship that can easily be recognized between the three basic structures – declarative, interrogative, and imperative – and the three general communicative functions – statement, question, and command/request: declaratives stand for making statements, interrogatives are used for asking questions, and imperatives express commands and/or requests.

Whenever there is a direct relationship between a structure and a function, we have a direct speech act. Whenever there is an indirect relationship between structure and function, we have an indirect speech act. Thus, when we use a declarative to make a statement, we have a direct speech act, but when we use a declarative to make a request, there is an indirect speech act. For instance, an utterance like *It's cold outside*, when used as a statement, is a direct speech act (*I hereby tell you that it is cold outside*), but when used as a command/request, it is an indirect speech act (*I hereby request you that you close the window*).

Direct speech acts are the speech acts in which “the relation between the illocutionary force and the words uttered is straightforward.” (Allot, 2010: 63)

Indirect speech acts are utterances which achieve “a certain illocutionary force without ‘wearing it on its sleeve’... The use of indirect speech acts depends partly on inference, partly on knowledge of how the language is typically used in a certain culture.” (Allot, 2010: 102)

Yule proposes the following set of utterances that can be used to express the speaker's wish/command that the listener should not stand in front of the television:

Move out of the way! (imperative)

Do you have to stand in front of the TV? (interrogative)

You are standing in front of the TV. (declarative)

You'd make a better door than a window. (declarative)

From this set of sentences, only the first sentence is a direct speech act (command expressed by imperative), the rest are all indirect speech acts.

One of the most common types of indirect speech acts in English has the form of interrogative, which is not typically used to ask a question (we do not expect only an answer, we expect an action).

E.g.:

Could you pass the salt?

Would you open this?

Indirect speech acts are generally associated with greater politeness in English than direct speech acts. According to Levinson (1997: 264), most usages in English are indirect. The imperative is rarely used to express requests or commands (as in *Close the door!*); instead, we tend to use softer solutions, like the following:

I want you to close the door.

I'd be much obliged if you'd close the door.

Can you close the door?

Would you close the door?

Would you mind closing the door?

It might help to close the door.

May I ask you to close the door?

The same idea is emphasized by Mey as follows: “The speech act of requesting, for example, is very rarely performed by means of an imperative in English. Instead, it is standardly carried out indirectly. Furthermore, there are

probably infinitely many varieties of sentences that can be used to indirectly make a request, as shown in (30).

(30a) *I want you to put the cake in the oven.*

(30b) *Can you put the cake in the oven?*

(30c) *Will you put the cake in the oven?*

(30d) *Would you put the cake in the oven?*

(30e) *Would you mind putting the cake in the oven?*

(30f) *You ought to put the cake in the oven.*

(30g) *May I ask you to put the cake in the oven?*

(30h) *I wonder if you'd mind putting the cake in the oven.*" (Mey, 2009: 1005)

The usefulness of speech act analysis is in illustrating the kinds of things we can do with words and identifying some of the conventional utterance forms we use to perform specific actions. However, there are several problems with the speech act theory. For example, many speech act theorists fail to take proper account of indeterminacy (i.e. by leaving the force of an utterance unclear, the speaker may leave the hearer the opportunity to choose between one force and another). Thus, the utterance *If I were you I'd leave town straight away* can be interpreted according to the context as a piece of advice, a warning, or a threat.

Many speech acts are culture-specific. "This is particularly so in the case of institutionalized speech acts, which typically use standardized and stereotyped formulae, and are performed in public ceremonies. A good example is provided by the speech act of divorcing. In some Muslim cultures, under the appropriate circumstances, the uttering of a sentence... three times consecutively by a husband to his wife will *ipso facto* constitute a divorce. By contrast, in Western cultures, no one (no matter what his or her religion is) can felicitously use 'I hereby divorce you.' to obtain a divorce." (Mey, 2009: 1006)

Any given speech act may be culture-specific. "Rosaldo (1982), for example, observed that the speech act of promising has no place among the Ilongots – a tribal group of hunters and horticulturalists in the Philippines. She attributes the absence of this speech act in the conceptual repertoire of the Ilongot to a lack of interest in sincerity and truth in that community. The Ilongot, argues Rosaldo, are more concerned with social relationships than with personal intentions. On the basis of anthropological evidence such as this, Rosaldo claims that the universality of Searle's typology of speech acts cannot be maintained. Another example of this kind has been reported for the Australian aboriginal language Yolngu. According to Harris..., there does not seem to be any speech act of thanking in the Yolngu speaker's repertoire....

Secondly, given a particular situation, pertinent speech acts are carried out differently in different cultures. For instance, in some East Asian and Western cultures, if one steps on another person's toes, one normally performs the speech act of apologizing. But apparently this is not the case among the Akans, a West African culture..... Another example: while in English thanks and compliments are usually

offered to the hosts when leaving a dinner party, in Japanese society, apologies such as *o-jama itashimashita* 'I have intruded on you' are more likely to be offered by the guests. A similar speech act of apologizing is performed in Japanese upon receiving a present, when a Japanese speaker is likely to say something like *sumimasen* – the most common Japanese 'apology' formula or one of its variants. Conversely (as pointed out by many authors), apologies can be used in a much broader range of speech situations in Japanese than in English.... Thirdly, in different cultures/languages, the same speech act may meet with different typical responses. For example, a compliment normally generates acceptance/thanking in English, but self-denigration in Chinese, Japanese, or even Polish.... Fourthly, the same speech act may differ in its directness/indirectness in different cultures." (Mey, 2009: 1007)

3.4.3. Speech events

Speech acts are often played out over a number of turns, so we need to look at more extended interaction to understand how these actions are carried out and interpreted within speech events. Yule defines speech events as activities "in which participants interact via language in some conventional way to arrive at some outcome." (Yule, 1996: 57) Speech events may include an obvious central speech act (for example, in a complaining speech event, an utterance like *I don't really like this!* is an obvious central speech act). Speech acts may also include other utterances leading up to and subsequently reacting to that central action. For instance, requests can be longer speech events, without having an obvious and clear request in their structure. For example, in the following speech event, though it is a requesting speech event, there is no overt request expressed, there is no actual request from him to her to do anything:

Him: Oh, Mary, I'm glad you are here.

Her: What's up?

Him: I can't get my computer to work.

Her: Is it broken?

Him: I don't think so.

Her: What's it doing?

Him: I don't know. I'm useless with computers.

Her: What kind is it?

Him: It's a Mac. Do you use them?

Her: Yeah.

Him: Do you have a minute?

Her: Sure.

Him: Oh, great. (Yule, 1996: 57)

In this speech event, the response of the girl, *Sure*, is an acknowledgement not only for having time available but also for expressing willingness to perform the unstated action.

In the speech event:

Teacher: What are you laughing at?

Child: Nothing. (Levinson, 1997: 278), the interpretation of what is said is significantly different from the content of what is said (by virtue of the assumption that laughing is a restricted activity in the classroom, we can interpret this exchange like a command to stop laughing issued by the teacher, and the acceptance of the command). By analysing speech events, we can discover other ways of studying how more gets communicated than is said.

Speech act theory has had a notable impact upon the emergence and development of communicative language teaching. Thus, communicative methods focus not only on the mastery of grammar and vocabulary but also on language functions, on how speech acts (such as greetings, compliments, apologies, invitations, and complaints) can be delivered, interpreted, and responded to. (Coposescu, 2004: 38)

The basics of the speech act theory centre on the idea that words, when placed together, do not always have a fixed meaning. Speech act theory is a continuing discourse, still written about and criticized in hundreds of articles and books.

TO SUM UP

– Speech acts are actions performed via utterances (apology, complaint, compliment, etc.). The speaker normally expects that his/her communicative intention will be recognized by the hearer. Both the speaker and the hearer are usually helped in this process by the circumstances surrounding utterances. These circumstances, including other utterances, are called speech events.

– For an utterance to perform a certain act, some appropriate conditions have to be fulfilled. The technical term for these conditions is felicity conditions.

Felicity conditions = circumstantial conditions that allow a speaker to make a successful speech act.

If a performative speech act works, i.e. satisfies social conventions, it is felicitous, if not, it is infelicitous.

– Preparatory conditions

– Sincerity conditions

– Execution conditions

Austin's Speech Act Theory

– Sentences that are not used just to say things (i.e. describe a certain state of affairs), but rather actively do things = performatives.

– Sentences that convey information = constatives.

Performatives are found at work: universities and schools (conferring degrees, rustivating, excluding students); the church (baptizing, confirming, marrying, exorcism, excommunication, combination (cursing)); governance and

civic life (crowning of monarchs, dissolution of Parliament, passing legislation, awarding honours, ennobling, decorating); the law (enacting or enforcing of various judgments, passing sentence, swearing oaths); the army (signing on, giving an order to attack, open or retreat fire); sports (cautioning or sending off players, appealing for a dismissal); business (hiring, firing, establishing a verbal contract, naming a ship);

- The test for checking performatives is the so-called hereby test.

Austin's further and most important categories are:

- locutionary act: the basic act of utterance, producing a meaningful linguistic expression;

- illocutionary act: performed via the communicative force of an utterance, the function that we have in mind when we produce an utterance;

- perlocutionary act: the effect you intend your utterance to have on the hearer.

- Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices, the explicit and the implicit IFIDs.

1. Explicit IFIDs

- the so-called performative verbs (*warn, promise, bet, ask, tell, suggest*);

- 1st person, simple present: *I warn (you); I suggest (that you)...*

- The *hereby* speech acts: *I hereby warn you...; I hereby promise you; You are hereby charged with forgery* (in this latter case, hereby is not inserted between the subject and the verb)

- Imperative forms: *Come up and see me some time; Passengers are requested to tighten seatbelts during take-off.*

2. Implicit (primary) IFIDs: word order, stress, intonation, lowered voice quality:

Searle's taxonomy of speech acts: Searle subdivided Austin's illocutionary speech acts into:

- Declarations: speech acts that change the world via their utterance.

- Representatives: speech acts that the speaker believes to be the case or not.

- Expressives: speech acts that state what the speaker feels (psychological states).

- Directives: speech acts that speakers use to get someone else do something. They express what the speaker wants.

- Commissives: speech acts that the speakers use to commit themselves to some future action. They express what the speaker intends.

Direct and indirect speech acts:

- the three basic structures – declarative, interrogative, and imperative;

- the three general communicative functions – statement, question, and command/request.

- Whenever there is a direct relationship between a structure and a function, we have a direct speech act. Whenever there is an indirect relationship between structure and function, we have an indirect speech act.

GRICE'S THEORY OF IMPLICATURE

Keywords and concepts: *conversational implicature: implicatures and inferences; to imply and to infer; the co-operative principle; the Gricean maxims: maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation/relevance, maxim of manner; hedges; flouting the maxims and generating implicature; opting out, suspending the (universality of) maxims, infringing*

4.1. The conversational principle: the co-operative principle

Herbert Paul Grice (1913–1988) is famous for his theory of meaning and his theory of conversation. Grice was aware of the inferential nature of communication and the difference between what is said and what is meant: “the main characteristic of human communicative behavior is that its major part takes place between the explicitly expressed words. Most of the time, there is a significant difference between what we say and what we mean. In spite of this, we usually have no difficulty figuring out what the speaker tries to communicate implicitly. Why is this so? According to Grice, the decisive feature of pragmatic interpretation is its inferential nature He argued that most aspects of utterance interpretation that traditionally are regarded as conventional, or semantic, should be treated as conversational, or pragmatic. This means that the hearer constructs and evaluates a hypothesis about the speaker’s meaning. In this process she/he relies on the meaning of utterances, contextual and background assumptions, and general communicative principles that speakers are supposed to observe in normal circumstances. In the center of the Gricean approach are the so-called implicatures which are aspects of the speaker’s meaning inferred on the basis of contextual assumptions of communication and principles.

Out of the three main elements of inferential intention-recognition: meaning of utterances, contextual and background assumptions, and principles of communication, the latter has generated the most debate. Pragmaticians have been engaged in searching for communicative principles that govern communication. A principle is the formalized expression of the behavior of a system. It is not a statistical generalization but a causal, mechanical explanation, a general law. Models of communication, especially cognitive ones, have made

serious efforts to identify the principles that govern different aspects of use and understanding of language.” (Mey, 2009: 106)

As Coposescu puts it (2004: 51), people are able to interpret other people's utterances apparently with a surprising degree of accuracy. This happens because words and sentences are used by people in certain contexts to do something, they have certain functions, and part of that so-called common background or knowledge people share is that they are aware of these functions.

The same idea is emphasized by Yule: “In accepting speakers' presuppositions, listeners normally have to assume that the speaker who says *my car* really does have a car This sense of cooperation is simply one in which people having a conversation are not normally assumed to be trying to confuse, trick, or withhold relevant information from each other.” (Yule, 1996: 35)

People talking to each other take much for granted and they assume a common language. “*Common knowledge* as a technical notion was introduced by David Lewis (1969) to account for how people coordinate with each other.... The notion of *common ground* was introduced, in turn, by Robert Stalnaker (1978), based on Lewis's common knowledge, to account for the way in which information accumulates in conversation: Roughly speaking, the presuppositions of a speaker are the propositions whose truth he takes for granted as part of the background of the conversation ... Presuppositions are what is taken by the speaker to be the common ground of the participants in the conversation, what is treated as their common knowledge or mutual knowledge.” (Mey, 2009: 116)

Thus, the concept of common knowledge or common background, this “personal common ground is essential to the processes by which people converse. To communicate is, according to its Latin roots, to make common – to establish something as common ground. Common ground is information that is common to a community of people. The other main basis for common ground is joint experience. Communal common ground is fundamental to account for the conventions of language, what are termed the ‘rules of language’. These include conventions of semantics, syntax, morphology, phonology, and pragmatics. Speakers ordinarily try to use words that their addressees will understand, and that requires a ‘shared lexicon.’ The problem is that every community has its own ‘communal lexicon’. Although words such as dog... are common to English in general, others are common only to one or another nested community; in Bostonian, for example, a barnie is a Harvard student. Indeed, every community (Californians, lawyers, football fans, ophthalmologists) has a specialized lexicon. The lexicon for lawyers includes tort, mortmain... The lexicon for ophthalmologists includes tonometry ...and amblyopia. To use barnie or mortmain is to take as common ground a Bostonian or legal lexicon. Communal lexicons are sometimes called jargon, dialect, patois, idiom, parlance, nomenclature, slang, argot, lingo, cant, or vernacular; or they consist of regionalisms, colloquialisms, localisms, or technical terminology.” (Mey, 2009: 117–118)

To understand the core of Grice's principle of co-operation, let us take the following utterance, for instance: *The window is open* (Cook, 1989; qtd. by Coposescu, 2004: 51). This utterance may be an expression of worry if it is uttered by wife to husband in the middle of the night. It may be an order, if it is uttered by the head teacher to a student. It may also be an interpretation if it is uttered by a detective to the assistant, and it is decoded as such, depending on the context and the circumstances of the utterance. Yet, the functional interpretation of the language might lead to difficulties as not all functions can be labelled and because there is not always a neat correspondence between a single utterance and a single function.

"Thus, the following questions might be asked:

1. If people can mean different things with the same words, how do human beings interpret what is meant from what is said?

2. Why is there a divergence of function and form, or why do not people speak directly and say what they mean?" (Coposescu, 2004: 51–52)

An answer to this question may be provided by Grice's theory of implicature, which attempts to explain how, by means of shared rules of conversations, competent language-users manage to understand one another. The focus of Grice's theory is on cases in which the speaker, when delivering an utterance, conveys more than the meaning of the words he uses. Implicature is the implication that the speaker intends to convey, "something that may be inferred from the fact that the sentence was uttered, and uttered in a certain way, in a certain context." (Allot, 2010: 2) One of Grice's own examples has become famous: "A professor is asked to provide a letter of recommendation for a student who is a candidate for a philosophy job, and he writes ... *Dear Sir, Mr. Jones's command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials had been regular.....* In writing this, the professor implicates that the student is no good at philosophy, since if he had been able to say something good about his philosophical abilities, he should have done so." (Allot, 2010: 2–3)

Alan Cruse also emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between what is said and what is implicated: "In Grice's system, implicatures in general stand in opposition to 'what is said', as components of a more inclusive 'what is meant'." (Cruse, 2011: 413)

The study of implicature does not have an extended history. The key ideas related to the issue of implicature were proposed by Grice in the William James lectures, delivered at Harvard in 1967, partially published in 1975 (*Logic and Conversation*) and in 1978 (like Austin before him, Grice was invited to give lectures at Harvard University). As we learn from Mey's *A Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics*, "(Herbert) Paul Grice was born on March 15, 1913 in Birmingham, England, into the family of Herbert and Mabel Grice. His father was a successful businessman who manufactured small metal items. Herbert Paul was educated at Bristol Clifton College and at Corpus Christi College at Oxford University. While in college, Grice combined the study of classics with philosophy and later

became a lecturer in philosophy at St. John's College, where he was elected a fellow in 1939. During World War II, Grice served his country in the Navy, first in the North Atlantic, then from 1942 in Navy Intelligence at the Admiralty. After his military service, Grice returned to Oxford's St. John's College. At the end of 1967, he left for the University of California at Berkeley, where he taught and conducted research, obtaining full professorship in 1975. In 1980, Grice retired from his university position, but remained active in pursuing his linguistic and philosophical investigations. Paul Grice is generally known for his two most influential papers, 'Meaning,' published in 1957, and 'Logic and Conversation,' published in 1975. In 'Meaning,' he distinguishes between two types of meaning: (1) the 'natural' or 'observable' meaning and (2) the 'nonnatural' meaning, that is, the idiosyncratic meaning of a particular communicator. In 'Logic and Conversation,' Grice argues that in order to communicate people need to cooperate while exchanging verbal information, and proposes the 'cooperative principle'; "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted direction or purpose of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." (Grice, 1975: 45)

Grice's theory wishes to explain how a hearer gets from what is said to what is meant, from the level of expressed meaning to the level of implied meaning. It is essentially a theory on how people use the language. Grice's suggestion is that there is a set of assumptions guiding the conduct of conversation. These are some guidelines for the efficient and effective use of language in conversation to further co-operative ends.

"Grice (1975) and Sacks et al. (1974) have described such sets of rules based on observations of successful and unsuccessful conversations. The most basic principles are (1) to take turns and (2) to be 'cooperative'. Grice defined cooperation in terms of four 'maxims,' the Maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner. When it is a person's turn in conversation, his or her contribution should provide neither too much nor too little information, and it should be relevant, clear, and true." (Mey, 2009: 208)

4.1.1. Conversational implicature: implicatures and inferences

"The basic assumption in conversation is that (according to Grice, 1975), unless otherwise indicated, the participants are adhering to some shared rules of conversation, which he calls the *Co-operative Principle*." (Coposescu, 2004: 52)

Let's take a look at the following sample conversation (Levinson, 1983):

E.g. A: I hope you brought the bread and the cheese.

B: Ah, I brought the bread.

Coposescu (2004: 53) explains that in order for A to understand B's reply A has to assume that B is co-operating, and that he has given B the right amount of information. But he didn't mention the cheese. If he had brought the cheese, he

would have said so. He must intend that A infers that what is not mentioned was not brought. In this case, B has conveyed more than he said via a conversational implicature. Another example could be: *Can you tell me the time? Well, the milkman has come.* (Levinson, 1997: 97) In this case, one can infer that it must be past the time the milkman usually arrives.

Grice's Cooperative Principle (often abbreviated to CP) is defined as "the claim that in conversation participants try to make their contributions suitable to the shared purpose of the talk exchange that they are engaged in: that is, they cooperate with each other in the strong sense that they have a shared goal beyond understanding and being understood." (Allot, 2010: 51)

Let us clarify the two basic terms that stand at the core of Grice's theory, i.e. *implicature* and *inference*, and the corresponding verbs *to imply* and *to infer*. "The verb *to imply* is used when the speaker generates some meaning beyond the semantic meaning of the words; thus, *implicature* (term devised by Grice) refers to the implied meaning generated intentionally by the speaker." (Coposescu, 2004: 53) Implicature is the "communicated implication of an utterance." (Allot, 2010: 92) Thus, *implicature* and the related verb *implicate* are technical terms coined by Grice to refer to what a speaker means in making an utterance beyond what the speaker actually says.

To infer, on the other hand, refers to the situation in which the hearer deduces meaning from available evidence. *Inference* is the inferred meaning deduced by the hearer, which may or may not be the same as the speaker's intended implicature. The distinction between explicit and implicit assumptions/propositions is spelled out in the following way:

"Explicature is an ostensively communicated assumption that is inferentially developed from one of the incomplete conceptual representations (logical forms) encoded by the utterance.

Implicature is an ostensively communicated assumption that is not an explicature; that is, a communicated assumption which is derived solely via processes of pragmatic inference. The difference between explicatures and implicatures lies essentially in... [the fact that]...: explicatures are developments of the logical form that they contain as a proper subpart, whereas implicatures are derived purely inferentially." (Mey, 2009: 373)

Here is an example which illustrates the distinction between implicature and inference:

(Source: Thomas, 1995: 59; qtd. by Coposescu, 2004):

Some years ago, Jenny Thomas went to stay with her brother and his family, including his son, aged 5. She had had with her an electric toothbrush, into which she had recently put new batteries. Her brother asked to see the toothbrush, but when he tried to operate it, it would not work:

J. T.: That's funny. I thought I put in some new batteries.

Nephew: (Going extremely red): The ones in my engine still work.

Here is Thomas's interpretation of what was going on in the above conversation:

J. T's remark had been a genuine expression of surprised irritation, addressed to the family at large, and she did not expect any response. However, her nephew misinterpreted the force of her utterance as an accusation and inferred (wrongly) that he was a suspect. According to Thomas, we can spell out the interpretation of the boy's contribution as follows:

“Step 1: The first step in any interpretation is to assign sense and reference to the words. In this case, this was not difficult; the boy was asserting that he had batteries in the engine of his toy train which were in working order.

Step 2: The hearer works out the speaker's intention in uttering those words; they understood him to have implied that he was not responsible for the fact that the batteries were flat. The pragmatic force of his utterance was to deny guilt.

Step 3: Nevertheless, everyone present inferred from the evidence (from their knowledge of how little boys behave, from the fact that he blushed, from the attempt to deflect attention from his toy, and from the fact that he spoke at all) that he had in fact switched the batteries.’

Grice's theory is designed to explain how hearers get from level 1 to level 2, from what is said to what is implied. Steps 1 and 2 fall within the realm of pragmatics; the third step depends on more than just linguistic factors and needs to be explained within a more general theory, that of social interaction.” (Coposescu, 2004: 54–55)

In Grice's approach, “both ‘what is implicated’ and ‘what is said’ are part of speaker meaning. ‘What is said’ is that part of meaning that is determined by truth-conditional semantics, while ‘what is implicated’ is that part of meaning that cannot be captured by truth conditions and therefore belongs to pragmatics.” (Mey, 2009: 365)

4.1.2. The co-operative principle

George Yule offers the following example on how speakers encode and decode meanings: “In the middle of their lunch, one woman asks another how she likes the hamburger she is eating, and receives the answer *A hamburger is a hamburger*. This example and other apparently pointless expressions like *business is business* or *boys will be boys*, are called *tautologies*. If they are used in a conversation, clearly the speaker intends to communicate more than is said. When the listener hears the expression..., she first has to assume the speaker is being co-operative and intends to communicate something. That something must be more than just what the words mean. It is an additional conveyed meaning, called an implicature.... Given the opportunity to evaluate the hamburger, the speaker ... has responded without an evaluation, thus one implicature is that she has no opinion, either good or bad, to express.

Depending on other aspects of the context, additional implicatures ... might be inferred.” (Yule, 1996: 35–36)

Let’s consider another example, also taken from Yule (1996: 36): *There is a woman sitting on a park bench and a large dog lying on the ground in front of the bench. A man comes along and sits down on the bench.*

Man: Does your dog bite?

Woman: No

(The man reaches down to pet the dog. The dog bite’s the man’s hand)

Man: Ouch! You said your dog doesn’t bite.

Woman: He doesn’t. But that’s not my dog.

The problem here is the man’s assumption that more was communicated than was said. In other words, the man assumed that the woman, by saying NO, meant that the dog lying at her feet was her dog, and it didn’t bite.

From the man’s perspective, the woman’s answer provides less information than expected: she might be expected to provide the information stated in the last line (But that’s not my dog.).

What counts as co-operation? In order to better explain his point, “Grice invites us to consider the following, quite unextraordinary exchange:

A: I am out of petrol.

B: There is a garage round the corner. (Grice, 1989: 32)

Assuming A immediately proceeds to the garage, secures the petrol, and refills his car, we may describe B’s contribution as having been successful. By what rational process of thought was A so quickly able to come to the conclusion that the garage to which B refers would fulfil his need for petrol? Why did B’s utterance work? Grice’s answer: because A and B adhere to the Cooperative Principle of Discourse.” (Mey, 2009: 152)

Grice limits the use of the co-operative principle for describing only talk exchanges that exhibit the following three specific characteristics:

1. The participants have some common immediate aim.
2. The contributions of the participants [are] dovetailed, mutually dependent.
3. There are some sort of understanding (often tacit) that, other things being equal, the transactions should continue in appropriate style unless both parties are agreeable that it should terminate.” (Mey, 2009: 152)

Yule, on the other hand, emphasizes that “the concept of there being an expected amount of information provided in conversation is just one aspect of the more general idea that people involved in a conversation will co-operate with each other.... In most circumstances, the assumption of co-operation is so pervasive that it can be stated as a co-operative principle of conversation and elaborated in four sub-principles or maxims.” (Yule, 1996: 36)

Grice’s principle of co-operation (CP) is formulated as follows: *Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.*

According to this principle, people interpret language on the assumption that the sender of the message, i.e. the speaker obeys the following four maxims:

“1. Maxim of quantity: Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purpose of the exchange. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2. Maxim of quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true. Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack evidence.

3. Maxim of relation: Be relevant

(N.B.: the maxim of relation is also called the maxim of relevance)

4. Maxim of manner: Be perspicuous. Avoid obscurity of expression. Avoid ambiguity. Be brief. Be orderly.” (Yule, 1996: 37)

Thus, “the Gricean cooperative principle is subdivided into context-related maxims. According to the maxim of quantity, one should provide the listener with just the needed amount of information. The maxim of quality states that one should produce only texts that one believes to be true. One needs also to be relevant while communicating with others; and last but not least, one should communicate in a particular manner, that is, express oneself verbally in a clear way. Grice is probably best known for presenting an idea of ‘conversational implicature’ in terms of this theory. For example, let us suppose that A informs B, “I’m cold,” and B replies, “Here is a blanket.” B’s reply, by offering the blanket, is a proper response to A’s conversationally implicated request to B to do something about A’s being cold.” (Mey, 2009: 318–319)

The concept of maxim is crucial within the theory of the co-operative principle. “Grice’s own characterization of the entity is many-faceted. First of all, he was unambiguous on the point that the maxims are descriptive rather than prescriptive.... flouting is the blatant breach of one of the maxims. Because all hearers embody faith in the speaker’s inherent intention to be cooperative (i.e. to observe the maxims [at some level]), a seeming breach will trigger a reasoning process whereby the hearer will try to come up with a meaning for the utterance that turns it into an act of observing the given maxim(s) (an implicature).” (Mey, 2009: 569–570)

Conversational maxims are “rules or principles which interlocutors should observe in conversation and which can give rise to implicatures. The claim is that a rational speaker in a conversation will try to be cooperative, and, other things being equal, this will involve obeying the maxims. A hearer can therefore expect a speaker to conform to the maxims unless there is a good reason for not doing so. As a result, both apparent and real violations of the maxims can be used to indicate that the speaker meant more than she said, that is, to convey an implicature.” (Allot, 2010: 45)

Grice’s maxims are, according to Allot, a kind of application of the view shared by Grice that communicative behaviour is governed by various aesthetic, social, and moral maxims. (Allot, 2010: 46) Using this assumption, combined

with the knowledge of the world, the receiver can reason from the literal, semantic meaning of what is said to the pragmatic meaning, and infer what the sender is intending to do with his/her words.

E.g.: A neighbour to you:

Sorry, dear. I saw you were home. My cat got stuck in the tree over there.

The hearer (you) starts from the knowledge and experience of the world that a cat is likely to be very unhappy stuck in a tree, that a human is able to free such a cat, etc.

According to the co-operative principle, the hearer assumes that the neighbour is telling the truth (not playing a joke); that she is being relevant (compare with: *The tree is in blossom*). So, the utterance is interpreted as a request for help in freeing the cat. The pragmatic meaning would be: *Come and free the cat which is stuck in the tree.* (adapted from Cool, 1989; qtd. by Coposescu, 2004: 57–58)

The maxims can be defined as *unstated assumptions people have in conversations*. We assume that people normally provide an appropriate amount of information; we assume that they tell the truth, they are relevant, and try to be as clear as possible. Because these principles are assumed in normal interaction, speakers rarely mention them. However, there are certain expressions used to mark that speakers may be in danger of *not fully* adhering to the principles. (Coposescu, 2004: 58) These expressions are generally called *hedges*. Hedges are “linguistic items that indicate a weakened commitment on the part of the speaker.” (Allot, 2010: 85)

The following examples illustrate the way these hedges work. The examples have been taken or adapted from Yule (1996: 38–39):

E.g.:

Quality:

- a. *As far as I know*, they’re married.
- b. *I may be mistaken*, but I thought I saw a wedding ring on her finger.
- c. *I’m not sure if this is right*, but I heard it was a secret ceremony in Hawaii.
- d. He could not live without her, *I guess*.

Quantity:

- a. *As you probably know*, I am afraid of dogs.
- b. So, *to cut a long story short*, we grabbed our stuff and ran.
- c. *I won’t bore you with all the details*, but it was an exciting trip.

Relation:

- a. *I don’t know if this is important*, but some of the files are missing.
- b. *This may sound like a dumb question*, but whose handwriting is this?
- c. *Not to change the subject*, but is this related to the budget?

Manner:

- a. *This may be a bit confused*, but I remember being in a car.
- b. *I’m not sure if this makes sense*, but the car had no lights.
- c. *I don’t know if this is clear at all*, but I think the other car was reversing.

There are cases in which not all four maxims can be observed. "Brevity and truth often pull in opposite directions (a short answer is often simplified to the point of distortion). That is why legal discourse and scientific discourse often sacrifice the maxim of quantity to the maxim of quality. Maxims of quantity and manner are often at odds. To be clear, one sometimes needs to be long-winded." (Coposescu, 2004: 59)

There is a list of such markers, the so-called hedges that are indicators that the speakers are not only aware of maxims, but they want to show that they are trying to observe them. Such forms also communicate the speaker's concern that their listeners judge them to be co-operative partners in the conversation.

– Hedges for the maxim of quality, expressions used to indicate that what they are saying may not be totally accurate: *As far as I know; I may be mistaken, but; I'm not sure if this is right, but; ... I guess;*

– Hedges for the maxim of quantity: *As you probably know; So, to cut a long story short; I won't bore you with all the details;*

– Hedges for the maxim of relation, relevance, markers tied to the expectation of relevance, indicating that the speaker is aware that he/she may have drifted into a discussion of possibly non-relevant information: some expressions occur in the middle of the talk: *Oh, by the way; anyway; well, anyway;* others occur as initial phrases: *I don't know if this is important, but; this may sound like a dumb question, but; not to change the subject, but;*

– Hedges for the maxim of manner: *This may be a bit confused, but; I'm not sure if this makes sense, but; I don't know if this is clear at all, but.* (Yule, 1996: 38–39)

These maxims specify what participants have to do in order to communicate in a maximally efficient, rational and co-operative way. This kind of sincere, relevant and clear, neatly organized communication rarely exists in real-life encounters. Grice's theory is more subtle, as he admits that people do not follow these guidelines to the letter. "Rather, in most ordinary kinds of talk these principles are oriented to, such that when when talk does not proceed according to their specifications; hearers assume that the principles are nevertheless being adhered to at some deeper level." (Levinson, 1997: 102)

A. *Where is Jim?*

B. *There is a red car outside Helen's house.*

In this case, B fails to provide a literal answer to the question, seemingly violating the maxims of quantity and relevance. Yet, B's answer cannot be considered a non-co-operative answer (by asking ourselves what possible connection is there between Jim's location and the location of the red car, thus arriving to the conclusion – effectively conveyed by B – that, if Jim has a red car, he may be at Helen's place right now).

In such cases, inferences arise to preserve the assumption of co-operation. It is only by making the assumption contrary to superficial indications that the

inferences arise in the first place, and this is the kind of inference that Grice dubs a conversational implicature. Grice does not say that people always adhere to his maxims on a superficial level, but rather that they will interpret what is said as conforming to the maxims on at least some level.¹

These maxims are not arbitrary conventions of behaviour, but they rather describe rational means for conducting co-operative exchanges. Nor should we perceive Grice's maxims as moral laws or commands; they are rather assumptions about how a co-operative speaker will communicate. Thus, Grice's conversational maxims can be translated as follows: hearers assume (if there is no evidence to the contrary) that speakers are giving information relevant to the current discourse. So, if something sounds irrelevant, hearers try to find a way in which it *is* relevant.

4.1.3. Flouting the maxims. Generating implicature

How do implicatures arise? "In Grice's system, there are two main mechanisms. The first, which gives rise to what are sometimes called standard implicatures, requires the assumption that the speaker is doing their best to follow the Cooperative Principle, even though the result may not be optimum from the point of view of the hearer. The second mechanism involves a deliberate flouting of the maxims." (Cruse, 2011: 420)

There are circumstances where speakers may not follow the expectations of the co-operative principle (courtrooms, classrooms, where people are expected to say things that are already known to/by the others, thus violating the maxim of quantity). These situations belong to the field of institutional talk. However, even in normal, non-institutional talk, speakers may *opt out* of the maxim expectations, by using expressions like *no comment*. Such expressions communicate more than it is said. Such typical reactions (meaning *there must be something special here*) of listeners are a key to the notion of conversational implicature.

Allot offers some examples of conformance to the maxims, including apparent violations:

"A: *Smith doesn't seem to have a girlfriend these days.*

B: *He has been paying a lot of visits to New York lately.*" (Allot, 2010: 47). In this example, B's remark would be irrelevant, unless suggesting that A may have a girlfriend in New York.

He also makes reference to cases of clashes between maxims, indicating that sometimes maxims may clash in the sense that they recommend different courses of behaviour:

"A: *Where does C live?*

B: *Somewhere in the south of France.*" (Allot, 2010: 47)

1 [http://www.modlinguistics.com/elang/resource/ecourseware/flash/Chapter6Pragmatics\(2\).swf](http://www.modlinguistics.com/elang/resource/ecourseware/flash/Chapter6Pragmatics(2).swf)

In such cases, quality trumps quantity, leading to vague or general statement like the one above, implicating that she does not know where exactly C lives.

The flouting of maxims brings about implicatures by means of exploitation. “For example, an ironic utterance of *It's lovely weather for June* is a blatant violation of the first quality maxim *Do not say what you believe to be false*. The hearer, assuming that the speaker is attempting to be co-operative at some level, may infer that she has implicated something that is true, namely the opposite of what she seemed to be saying.” (Allot, 2010: 48)

Covert violation of a maxim or opting out imply cases of lying or utterances like: *I cannot say more, My lips are sealed, No comment*.

“Grice describes four ways in which maxims may go unfulfilled in ordinary conversation. The first three ways are fairly straightforward. One might violate or infringe a maxim. This infringement is often done with the intention of misleading; for example, one might say, ‘Patricia was with a man last night’ as a way of making Patricia’s routine dinner out with her husband seem clandestine. One might opt out, making it clear that one refuses to cooperate in a conversation for some reason; for example, one may be legally bound not to provide information one has. Or, one might encounter a clash of maxims, facing the choice of violating one maxim or another. For example, one may not be able to give all of the information required (quantity) because one does not have adequate evidence for the information (quality). Most interesting is the final possibility for the nonfulfillment of a maxim: flouting or exploiting a maxim for the purpose of implicating information.” (Mey, 2009: 153)

The situations which chiefly interested Grice were those in which “a speaker blatantly, deliberately fails to observe a maxim, not with any intention of deceiving or misleading, but because the speaker wants to prompt the hearer to look for a meaning which is different from the expressed meaning. These are intended violations of the maxims; the sender intends the receiver to perceive them as such. If the sender does not intend violations to be perceived as such, or if the receiver does not realise that they are deliberate, then communication degenerates into lying, or simply breaks down.” (Coposescu, 2004: 60)

Thus, Grice has in mind the implicatures that come about by overtly and blatantly *not* following some maxim, in order to exploit it *for communicative purposes*. He calls such usages *floutings* or *exploitations of the maxims*. “If there is a standard way of behaving in a certain situation, then by behaving differently it is possible to convey something, rather than have one’s behavior simply seen as inappropriate. This is exploitation. In Grice’s theory of conversation, *speakers can violate maxims of conversation in order to convey implicatures*. The key to this is that the hearer must consider the possibility that the speaker’s violation is a *calculated exploitation* rather than a mistake or a straightforward abuse of the rules.” (Allot, 2010: 73–74)

4.1.4. Flouts exploiting maxims of quality

Flouts which exploit the maxim of quality occur when speakers say something that is blatantly untrue.

Let us consider the following example:

Late on Christmas Eve 1993, an ambulance is sent to pick up a man who has collapsed in Newcastle city centre. The man is drunk and vomits all over the ambulanceman who goes to help him. The ambulanceman says:

'Great, that's really great! That's made my Christmas!'

Here the implicature is generated by the speaker's saying something which is patently and obviously false. According to Grice, the deductive process might work like this:

- i) The ambulanceman has expressed pleasure at having someone vomit over him.
- ii) There is no example in recorded history of people being delighted at having someone vomit over them.
- iii) I have no reason to believe that the ambulanceman is trying to deceive us in any way.
- iv) Unless the ambulanceman's utterance is entirely pointless, he must be trying to put across some other proposition.
- v) This must be some obviously related proposition.
- vi) The most obviously related proposition is the exact opposite of the one he has expressed.
- vii) The ambulanceman is extremely annoyed at having the drunk vomit over him.

(Source: Thomas, 1995:55; qtd. by Coposescu 2004: 60–61)

Cruse also offers some examples of violating the maxim of quality in a benign way:

I married a rat.

It'll cost the earth, but what the hell! (Cruse, 2011: 422) – such metaphoric or hyperbolic usages are not literally true; though none of them will mislead the hearer.

4.1.5. Flouts exploiting the maxim of quantity

A flout exploiting a maxim of quantity occurs when a speaker blatantly gives more or less information than the situation requires. The example with the dog that has bitten the man offers a typical case of flouting the maxim of quantity. Here is a similar example, borrowed from Coposescu (2004: 61):

A: How are we getting to the party?

B: Well, we're getting there by car.

B blatantly gives less information than A needs, thereby generating the implicature that, while she and her friends have made arrangements, A will not be travelling with them.

A case of exploiting the maxim of quantity is the tautology *Boys will be boys* (we interpret the first *boys* in a subtly different way from the second *boys*. The first includes all boys, even those we thought had been tamed and could be relied on for good behaviour. The second is predicative, and presents certain stereotypic properties of boys as being innate and unavoidable. (Cruse, 2011: 423)

4.1.6. Flouts exploiting the maxims of relation

The maxim of relation or relevance is exploited by making a response which is very obviously irrelevant to the topic at hand, like in the example below:

A: *Would you like a pizza?*

B: *Ask a child if he would like a pie.* (the English version of the Romanian *Vrei calule ovăz?*) (Coposescu, 2004: 62)

In this example, B does not provide a *yes* or *no* answer and he appears to flout the maxim of relation. B's response implicates that the answer to the question is *Obviously yes*. The additional meaning here is that – because the answer is so obvious – the question did not need to be asked in the first place.

The maxim of relation is violated on purpose in:

I say, did you hear about Mary's...

Yes, well, it rained nearly the whole time we were there. (Cruse, 2011: 423)

This is an obviously irrelevant comment, implicating that speaker 1 should watch out, as Mary is approaching them.

4.1.7. Flouts exploiting the maxim of manner

The following example, taken from Thomas, is one in which we flout the maxim of manner:

This interaction occurred during a radio interview with an un-named official from the United States Embassy in Port-au-Prince Haiti:

Interviewer: Did the United States Government play any part in Duvalier's departure? Did they, for example, actively encourage him to leave?

Official: I would not try to steer you away from that conclusion.

(Source: Thomas, 1995: 71 qtd. by Coposescu 2004: 62)

The official could have simply replied *Yes*. The actual response is extremely long-winded.

The maxim of manner is exploited in the exchange between the young mother and the babysitting friend:

I'll look after Samantha for you, don't worry. We'll have a lovely time. Won't we, Sam?

Great, but if you don't mind, don't offer her any postprandial concoctions involving super-cooled oxide of hydrogen. It usually gives rise to convulsive nausea." (Cruse, 2011: 423) This seeming prolixity implicates that the mother does not want Samantha to understand the real message (i.e. *don't give her fizzy drinks*).

Flouting the co-operative principle in order to make a point more forcefully also explains:

- metaphors ('*Queen Victoria was made of iron.*')
- hyperbole ('*I've got millions of beers in my cellar.*')
- irony and sarcasm ('*I love it when you sing out of key all the time.*')
- humour (e.g. puns) (examples adapted from Coposescu, 2004: 63)

4.1.8. Other ways of not observing the maxims

- *Opting out*

"Opting out means refusing to answer, and this is another way of non-observing the maxims. Such an example is Bill Clinton's response to a journalist, who was asking him about the Whitewater affair, a scandal in which Bill and Hillary were involved. When the journalist asked the question, Clinton took his microphone off, got out of his seat, told the journalist he'd had his two questions and went off." (Coposescu, 2004: 63)

- *Suspending the (universality of) maxims*

There are occasions, situations and/or cultures when it appears that there is no expectation that all the maxims will be observed. "Compare, for instance, an interrogation, where we would not expect that the maxim of relevance should be observed by the defendants, with a confessional, where we expect the exact opposite." (Coposescu, 2004: 63)

- *Infringing*

A speaker who, with no intention of generating an implicature and with no intention of deceiving, fails to observe that a maxim is said to *infringe* the maxim. For example, a speaker may fail to observe a maxim because of imperfect linguistic performance (foreigners, young child speaking, nervous speakers, etc.). (Coposescu, 2004: 63)

With regard to some of the critiques of the co-operative principle, it has been stated that there are some problems with the term *co-operation*. "Despite the care with which he used the term "cooperation," Grice is regularly accused of promulgating a theory that assumes too friendly a spirit of communicative interaction among people. This charge is most commonly made in work outside of Grice's own field of linguistic philosophy." (Mey, 2009: 153)

The main critical remarks regarding the Gricean maxims refer to the fact that they are culture specific, that on empirical grounds they may not be the right ones, that they are too many while other criticisms question the need for maxims. (Allot, 2010: 49)

Among other problems with the maxims, others referred to the haphazardness of communication and the specificity of maxims. “Grice himself identifies the problem as resulting from the thought that communication is simply too ‘haphazard’ to be described accurately as having a cooperative end. Some forms of communication are not appropriately described by the CP. For example, as Grice puts it, ‘Chitchat goes nowhere, unless making the time pass is a journey’ ... As an alternative explanation for the operation of conversational implicature, Kasher poses the ‘Rationalization Principle,’ which stems from the idea that Relevance (one of Grice’s maxims) is the only necessary element to explain a talk exchange.” (Mey, 2009: 155)

Grice considered and defined co-operation as the ruling element of verbal communicative interaction. “He argued that utterances automatically create expectations that guide the hearer toward the speaker’s meaning. He considered communication to be both rational and cooperative, and claimed that the inferential intention-recognition is governed by a cooperative principle and maxims of quality, quantity, relation, and manner (truthfulness, informativeness, relevance and clarity), which speakers are expected to observe.... Researchers have accepted and relied on the inferential nature of communication, but some have questioned the cooperative principle and maxims as the governing communicative principle of communication. Several critics of the Gricean view ... expressed their skepticism about the universality of maxims, arguing that different cultures have different principles or maxims. According to Gumperz (1978), culturally colored interactional styles create culturally determined expectations and interpretive strategies and can lead to breakdowns in intercultural and interethnic communication. Others ... argued that cooperation is not essential to communication and suggested a reduction of Grice’s maxims to a single principle of relevance. According to this view, a rational speaker will choose an utterance that will provide the hearer with a maximum number of contextual implications in a minimum processing effort. In recent years, two approaches have emerged as most influential in the debate about the communicative principle: the neo-Gricean view and the theory of relevance.” (Mey, 2009: 108)

Neo-Gricean pragmatists such as Horn and Levinson retained the view that co-operation is essential to communication. “Whether generalized or particularized, they argue, conversational implicature derives from the shared presumption that speaker and hearer are interacting rationally and cooperatively to reach a common goal. Although they kept the cooperative principle as a decisive factor of communication, they revised the maxims to account for a range of generalized implicatures, which Grice described as carried in all normal contexts and contrasted with more context-dependent particularized implicatures.... Supporters of Relevance Theory share Grice’s intuition that utterances raise expectations of relevance. However, they question several other aspects of his

approach, including the need for a cooperative principle and maxims, the focus on pragmatic processes that contribute to implicatures rather than to explicit, truth-conditional content, the role of deliberate maxim violation in utterance interpretation, and the treatment of figurative utterances as deviations from a maxim or convention of truthfulness. This fundamental idea, according to which communicated information comes with a guarantee of relevance, is the communicative principle of relevance.... Verbal communication usually conveys much more than is linguistically encoded. Pragmatic theories such as RT take an interest mainly in the enrichment of linguistic meaning, derivation of standard implicatures, and principles governing the process of communication.... In RT, it is argued that unintentionally transmitted information is subject merely to general cognitive, rather than specifically communicative constraints.” (Mey, 2009: 107–108)

Thus, some of the problems with Grice’s theory are:

- “It can be difficult to distinguish between different categories of non-observance;
- Sometimes it can be difficult to determine which maxim is being invoked, since maxims seem to overlap sometimes;
- Sometimes an utterance has a range of possible interpretations. How do we know which implications are intended?
- Grice’s four maxims are not all of the same order; they seem to be rather different in nature.” (Coposescu, 2004: 64)

TO SUM UP

In 1967, Grice outlined his theory of implicature. Grice’s theory is an attempt at explaining how a hearer gets from what is said to what is meant, from the level of expressed meaning to the level of implied meaning. Grice made a distinction between what is said and what is implicated.

Implicature = refers to the implied meaning generated intentionally by the speaker; what is implied rather than being said explicitly.

E.g. *Do you know the time? The bank is still open.*

Infer = refers to the situation in which the hearer deduces meaning from available evidence. Inference is the inferred meaning deduced by the hearer, which may or may not be the same as the speaker’s intended implicature.

Grice’s co-operative principle is formulated as follows: *Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.*

– Maxim of quantity: Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purpose of the exchange. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

– Maxim of quality: Do not say what you believe to be false; Do not say that for which you lack evidence.

– Maxim of Relation/Relevance: Be relevant.

– Maxim of Manner: be perspicuous, and avoid obscurity of expression; Avoid ambiguity; Be brief; Be orderly.

The maxims are unstated assumptions we have in conversations. We assume that people are normally going to provide an appropriate amount of information; we assume that they are telling the truth, being relevant, and trying to be as clear as they can.

Cases where maxims are not followed:

– Deliberate deception (an un-co-operative speaker who wishes to lie or to tell half-truth);

– Clashes between maxims: one maxim is violated to ensure the other is fulfilled: When does the shop open? Some time between 8 and 9. (The maxim of quantity violated, so as not to violate quality.);

– Opting out of maxims using hedges like the following *I don't know if this is true, but; I don't know if this is relevant, but; I don't want to change the subject, but; As far as I know; Oh, by the way; I'm no expert, but; Anyway, moving right along; I don't know if I can explain it clearly, but; ... , or something.*

Flouting the maxims generates implicature.

Flouting (exploiting maxims) = infringement of maxims with the following 3 characteristics:

– The infringement is blatant; speaker thinks hearer will notice the infringement.

– The co-operative principle is being adhered to (despite appearances).

– The infringement has the purpose of generating implicature.

The situations which chiefly interested Grice were those in which a speaker *blatantly, deliberately* fails to observe a maxim, not with any intention of deceiving or misleading, but because the speaker wants to prompt the hearer to look for a meaning which is different from the expressed meaning.

Examples:

– Concert review: *X produced a series of sounds which followed the score of Mozart's aria Non mi dir* = the performance was lousy, using produced a series of sounds instead of sang flouts the manner of relevance, implying that sang is inappropriate, i.e. what he/she did cannot be called singing.

– Job recommendation letter:

E.g. 1. TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: *Mr. X plays golf well, is always sober during his classes, and never hits his students hard.* = Mr. X is a bad candidate for a job as a teacher. To avoid violating the maxim of quality and being impolite, the writer violates maxims of relevance and quantity. The reader will assume that there are no good qualities of X to be mentioned in the job recommendation.

E.g. 2. *You will be lucky if you can get Mr. X to work for you* = Mr. X is lazy, the writer flouts the maxim of manner by choosing an ambiguous way of saying *You will be lucky if you can get Mr. X to become your employee.*

- *Jim's wife is a stupid cow. It's a nice weather isn't it?* = let me not comment on this; it flouts the maxim of relevance.²

- *War is war* = a tautology that flouts the maxim of quantity.

- Some other phenomena relying on the flouting of quality:

- irony and sarcasm
- humour
- hyperbole
- metaphor
- understatement

N.B.: Grice's notion of implicature can be extended to illocutionary acts. With *indirection*, a single utterance is the performance of one illocutionary act by way of performing another. For example, we can make a request or give permission by way of making a statement, say by uttering *It's getting cold in here* or *I don't mind*, and we can make a statement or give an order by way of asking a question such as *Is the Pope Catholic?* or *Can you open the door?* When an illocutionary act is performed indirectly, it is performed by way of performing some other one directly. When an utterance is *non-literal*, as with likely utterances of *My mind got derailed* or *You can stick that in your ear*, we do not mean what our words mean, but we mean something else instead. The force or the content of the illocutionary act being performed is not the one that would be predicted just from the meanings of the words being used. Occasionally, utterances are both non-literal and indirect. For example, one might utter *I love the sound of your voice* to tell someone non-literally (ironically) that she cannot stand the sound of his voice and thereby indirectly to ask him to stop singing.³

2 <http://www.shunsley.eril.net/armoore/2001:5>

3 <http://online.sfsu.edu/kbach/spchacts.html>

MACROPRAGMATICS. ISSUES OF CO-TEXT AND CONTEXT

Key words and concepts: *macropragmatic view of context: co-text and context, conversation analysis (CA), social context, conversation/ discourse/ text, approaches to the description of context: the ethnographic approach (the acronym SPEAKING) vs. the pragmatic approach (activity type, goals of the participants, allowable contributions, adhering to or suspending Gricean maxims, turn-taking and topic control)*

Context as “means by which we reach understanding” (Coposescu, 2004: 71) has been widely referred to in the literature. According to Mey (1993: 181), a truly pragmatic view on language cannot, and should not, restrict itself to such micropragmatic issues of context as deixis, speech acts, and implicit meaning. There is more to language use, from the perspective of its contribution, to generating meaning than the issues discussed so far. In particular, the idea that speech acts would be the basic units in terms of which all linguistic action could be understood is no longer accepted. Pragmaticians have turned, instead, to the study of chunks of linguistic interactions, usually *conversations* of various types and to a *macropragmatic* view of context.

When Levinson describes speech acts, he defines them as “operations on context, i.e. as functions from contexts into contexts” (Levinson, 1997: 276); he also defines context as “a set of propositions, describing the beliefs, knowledge, commitments and so on of the participants in a discourse.” (Levinson, 1997: 276) Thus, Levinson perceives context in terms of the internal background of the speaker, not necessarily external features of the speech event.

In order to better understand the way speakers are able to encode and decode context-dependent meanings, let us introduce two additional notions, *communicative competence* and *communicative performance*. The phrase *communicative competence* was invented and introduced by the North American socio-linguist and anthropologist, Dell Hymes, in the late 1960s. “He used it to reflect the following key positions on knowledge and use of language: The ability to use a language well involves knowing (either explicitly or implicitly) how to use language appropriately in any given context. The ability to speak and understand language is not based solely on grammatical knowledge...What counts as appropriate language varies according to context and may involve a

range of modes – for example, speaking, writing, singing, whistling, drumming. Learning what counts as appropriate language occurs through a process of socialization into particular ways of using language through participation in particular communities.” (Mey, 2009: 92–93)

Communicative competence is, in Allot’s view, “the ability to communicate in a language. Communicative competence includes competence with the grammatical forms of the language and the ability to put forms of the language to use in communication.” (Allot, 2010: 33)

The distinction between *competence* and *performance* was introduced by Noam Chomsky, and in Allot’s interpretation his main idea is that “it is necessary to distinguish between the body of knowledge of grammatical principles possessed by a competent speaker of a language, and the ability to use that grammatical knowledge. Performance may be diminished by various factors such as tiredness and drunkenness that are external to the speaker’s language abilities themselves. ... Chomsky has suggested that aspects of pragmatic ability are due to mentally represented pragmatic principles, that there is a *pragmatic competence*.” (Allot, 2010: 35)

Context is a key presupposition to the notion of communicative competence and is a central notion in sociolinguistics. “... communicative competence presupposes the following; that a language user’s knowledge – competence – is more than just grammar-based; that knowledge of language requires knowledge of the appropriate social conventions governing what and how something can be said, to whom and in what contexts. Appropriateness thus involves both linguistic and cultural knowledge.” (Mey, 2009: 96)

5.1. The issue of context

As Coposescu (2004: 71) mentions, the term *context* has apparently a limitless range of potentially relevant objects, and context seems to be a vague notion. “There has been considerable debate about what constitutes context and how context should be conceptualized and explored. Two significant and quite distinct approaches to the study of context can be found in conversation analysis and critical discourse analysis: the former orients inwards as it were towards language, the latter orients outwards towards the social world.” (Mey, 2009: 98)

However, we can understand the concept looking at it in an extensional way. It is far better to enlarge the scope of the units we are looking at, and rather than examining isolated sentences or utterances we consider those same utterances placed in the contexts in which they belong. According to Mey (1993: 182), this can be understood in two ways:

– either as extending the individual utterances making up the text = *co-text*;

– or, alternatively considering those utterances in their natural habitat, in which case we deal with the *larger context* in which people use language.

Context is a central issue of pragmatic studies as pragmatics deals with speaker meaning or what is communicated. While semantics studies context-invariant meaning, pragmatics studies the ways in which meaning depends on the context and derives from it. “The context must include information about the physical environment and information about the prior discourse (and, in some cases, particularly interpretation of literary texts, subsequent discourse must also be taken into account). Sometimes the notion of context is divided into (physical) context and co-text to mark the distinction between the two sources of information.... However, the context must also include facts about the speaker’s and the hearer’s beliefs, opinions, habits and so on. This can be seen clearly in the recovery of implicatures, although it applies elsewhere too. ... It might seem that a notion of context which includes the physical environment, the discourse and the knowledge and beliefs of speaker and hearer will have to be alarmingly broad. However, a principled limit can be drawn, based on the observation that the speaker cannot draw on information that she does not have access to, and that she must also take into account what information the hearer can access... Such considerations might suggest that the correct notion of context is the knowledge or beliefs that the speaker and hearer share.... If mutual knowledge does not obtain, communication may fail, since at some level the speaker and hearer may fail to coordinate on the intended interpretation.” (Allot, 2010: 42)

5.1.1. Context as co-text

Co-text is “the text before and after the passage that is being studied; textual context or linguistic context as opposed to non-linguistic context. In interpreting part of a text, it is essential to be aware of the co-text, just as it is essential to be aware of the broader context in which the text was produced.... This term is mostly used in studies of written texts, but it can also be applied to spoken or signed communication, given that it simply means the words and sentences surrounding the part in question.” (Allot, 2010: 53)

Speech acts normally and naturally occur in conversations, in interchanges between two or several conversationalists. Such a context, states Coposescu (2004: 72), should not be restricted to co-text. In the framework of *conversation analysis* (CA), research goes beyond the two-utterance interchange, and explores the mechanisms that guide people’s use of language in an extended, open conversational setting. Among the most important issues belonging to the analysis of co-text in conversation analysis, one should consider analysing *the floor* (who holds the right to speak), the rules for yielding or holding on to the floor, and *the turn* (that particular point in the conversation when one speaker leaves the floor and another speaker takes it).

However, conversation analysis does not take into consideration the social aspects of the extended context, as it is not interested in issues of social status, gender, age, etc. of the participants.

5.1.2. Social context

People engage in talk exchanges because they want to socialize. Therefore, linguistic behaviour is always a matter of social behaviour as well. This means that any understanding of meaning must be based on a correct understanding of the whole context in which the linguistic interaction takes place.

E.g.:

A: *I have a fourteen-year-old son.*

B: *Well, that's all right.*

A: *I also have a dog.*

B: *Oh, I'm sorry.*

It makes no sense at all unless we know what the context is: A is trying to lease a flat, and mentions the fact that he has a child. The landlord does not mind children, but when he hears about the dog, he indicates that A's prospects as a future leaseholder are rather dim. Now, the question can be asked what exactly the landlord is sorry about. It is clearly not the fact that A has a dog. Rather it has something to do with the fact that regulations for the block of flats do not allow tenants to have pets. So, the landlord is either sorry for A if A has to give up the dog or for himself (if A looks like a good future tenant) in case A renounces getting a lease. (Mey, 1993: 186; qtd. by Coposescu 2004: 73–74)

The social context naturally presupposes the existence of a particular society with implicit and explicit values, norms, rules and laws, and with its particular life conditions. The term *discourse* indicates not only the social occasion in which the linguistic interaction takes place (e.g. job interview, medical consultation, etc.), but it also shows how people use the language in their respective social contexts. Discourse is different from *text* in the sense that it embodies more than just the text understood as a collection of sentences. It is also different from *conversation*. Conversation is one particular type of text, governed by special rules. Thus, while it is natural to use the term *discourse* specifically in connection with conversation, discourse and conversation are not exactly the same. (Coposescu 2004: 74–75)

Let's look at the following case to show the difference between a discourse-oriented approach and one that is exclusively based on speech acts:

A: *I bet you \$500 that Swale will win the race.*

B: *Oh?* (Mey, 1993: 187)

In this conversation, some speech act linguists will claim that A has performed a speech act of betting, just by uttering the words *I bet*. Yet, in another, equally valid, pragmatic and discourse-oriented sense, he has not: B has not *risen*

to the bet by uttering, for example, *you're on*. Instead, B utters a non-committal and possibly neutral *Oh*. Consequently, there has been no *uptake* because one of the felicity conditions has not been fulfilled, and so there has been no bet. (explanation borrowed from Coposescu, 2004: 75)

5.2. Two approaches to the description of context

5.2.1. The ethnographic approach, or speech event approach

The sociolinguist Dell Hymes (1964) has introduced a useful acronym, i.e. SPEAKING (S = Setting and Scene, P = Participants, E = Ends, A = Act sequence, K = Keys, I = Instrumentalities, N = Norms of interpretation and of interaction, G = Genre). This acronym covers the factors that must be taken into account when trying to describe what happens when people use language. We shall make the presentation of each component of this acronym, as they appear in Coposescu (2004: 76–77):

S = the Setting and Scene of the exchange; the setting refers to the concrete physical circumstance in which speech takes place, e.g. courtrooms, classrooms, telephone conversations, passing acquaintances in the street, etc. The scene refers to the psychological and cultural circumstances of the speech situation, e.g. *consulting*, *pleading*, and *conferring*. The settings and scenes do not necessarily remain constant throughout a particular language exchange, although it appears to be easier to shift scenes than to shift settings, e.g. a speaker's attempt to tell a joke to dispel a tense atmosphere. Setting refers to time, place, and physical circumstances. Scene refers to the psychological or cultural definitions of the event: for example, what counts as a formal event varies from community to community or culture to culture.

P = the Participants may be of various kinds and may be referred to as Speaker, Hearer and audience, or Addressor, Addressee. Participants refer to whom is involved as either speaker/listener or audience.

E = Ends, i.e. the conventionally recognized and expected outcomes of an exchange as well as the personal goals that each of the P seeks to accomplish. Some speech events have conventional outcomes, e.g. diagnosis, verdict. Goals refer to what is expected to be achieved in any event: an outcome refers to what is actually achieved. Goals and outcomes exist at both community and individual participant level: for example, the conventional goal of a wedding ceremony may be marriage; however, individuals within that event may have other goals.

A = Act sequence, i.e. the actual language forms that are used, how these are used. It refers to message forms, i.e. topics of conversation and particular 'ways of speaking'. In a given culture, certain linguistic forms are conventional for certain types of talk. Acts are speech events that involve

a number and range of speech acts, particular types of utterances such as requests, commands, and greetings.

K = Keys refers to the tone, manner, and spirit in which a particular message is conveyed, in which acts are done, e.g. light-hearted, serious, precise, or playful, etc. Specific keys may be signalled through verbal or/and non-verbal means.

I = Instrumentalities, i.e. the choice of channel: oral/written, general/specialized language, formal/informal. Instrumentalities refer to the particular language/language varieties used and the mode of communication (spoken, written).

N = Norms of interpretation, i.e. interpretation which would normally be expected for the speech event in question; norms of interaction, interpretation in relation to the conventions of the conversation (e.g. who usually talks, for how long). Norms of interaction refer to rules of speaking, who can say what, when, and how. Norms of interpretation refer to the conventions surrounding how any speech may be interpreted.

G = the Genre that has to be recognized, e.g. novels, poems, lecture, advertisement, etc. According to Mey, genres are “categories or types of language use, such as the sermon, the interview, or the editorial. May be the same as ‘speech event’ but may be a part of a speech event. For example, the sermon is a genre and may at the same time be a speech event (when performed conventionally in a church); a sermon may be a genre, however, that is invoked in another speech event, for example, at a party for humorous effect.” (Mey, 2009: 95)

Dealing with rituals, ethnography seems very good in that it makes conscious the unconscious rules of our society. But, as Coposescu (2004: 77) puts it, there still remains a problem: from whose angle are we describing things? It cannot, however, explain the many variations in performance in less ritualistic situations. Moreover, it does not explain why it is that one person performs very differently from another in the very same linguistic situation (for example, why one person emerges from a job interview successfully, while another does not).

The ethnographic approach describes context in terms of the speech events. “Speech Event is a category ... that reflects the idea that all interaction is embedded in socio-cultural contexts and is governed by conventions emerging from those contexts. Examples of speech events are interviews, buying and selling goods in a shop, sermons, lectures, and informal conversation. The speech event involves a number of core components identified by Hymes, which are signaled in his mnemonic device SPEAKING ... to specify relevant features of a speech event.” (Mey, 2009: 95)

5.2.2. The pragmatic approach, or activity-type approach

The pragmatic approach, or activity-type approach relies on the notion of *activity type*. Levinson (1999: 69) defines an activity type as:

“...a fuzzy category whose focal members are *goal-defined, socially constituted, bounded, events with constraints on participants, setting, and soon, but above all, on the kinds of allowable contributions*. Paradigm examples would be teaching, a job interview, a jural interrogation, a football game, a task in a workshop, a dinner party and so on.

Because of the strict constraints on contributions to any particular activity, there are corresponding strong expectations about the functions that any utterance at a certain point in the proceedings can be fulfilling’ [...] Activity types help to determine how one says will be ‘taken’ –, that is, what kinds of inferences will be made from what is said.” (Levinson, 1999: 69)

The difference between a speech event approach and an activity-type approach is that the former has an outside view on context, whereas the latter looks at how language shapes the event. (Coposescu, 2004: 78)

Coposescu (2004) relies on Thomas (1995: 187–194) when she provides a very useful checklist, which will help us describe an activity type:

- *The goals of the participants*, namely the goals of the individuals rather than the goals of the whole speech event. The goals of one participant may be different from those of another. For example, the goal of a trial is to reach a fair verdict, but the goals of the prosecution lawyer are diametrically opposed to those of the defence lawyer and the defendant (to get a ‘guilty’ vs. ‘not guilty’ verdict). An individual’s goals may also change during the course of an interaction.

- *Allowable contributions*: some interactions are characterized by social or legal constraints on what the participants may say. For example, in courts of law, the prosecution is not allowed to refer to a defendant’s previous convictions; in the British House of Commons members may not use certain abusive terms. What is pragmatically interesting is the way in which people will work round these restrictions. Coulthard (1989, qtd. by as Coposescu 2004: 78), for example, relates how one prosecution lawyer was able to indicate that the defendant had previous convictions by referring to the circumstances in which the defendant had injured his foot (it had been broken during a burglary); Churchill (prohibited from calling an opponent a ‘liar’), famously came up with the phrase ‘guilty of a terminological inexactitude’.

- *The degree to which Gricean maxims are adhered to or suspended*: the expectation of the way in which the maxims will be observed varies considerably from culture to culture and from activity type to activity type (e.g. in Parliament, in media interviews with politicians, or in the law courts), there is a very low expectation that what is said (or implied) will be the whole truth; in other activity types (such as going to a Confession), the expectation that the speaker will tell the whole truth is extremely high.

- *Turn-taking and topic control*: to what degree an individual can exploit turn-taking norms in order to control an interaction, establish his or her own topic of conversation.

As Copesescu (2004: 80) puts it, language is not a simple reflection of the physical or social context, but language is used to establish and change the nature of the relationship between speakers and the nature of the activity type in which they are participating. In other words, context is not something *given*, as something imposed from outside or something stable and unchangeable. The speakers can make and change the context by the simple fact that they use the language.

5.3. Other context types

Pragmatics can be defined as the study of how the context influences the way we interpret utterances. In other words, pragmatics studies the use of language in context. If we consider the utterance *There is a dog in the house*, we interpret it as a warning, threat, promise, or a simple statement depending on the context.

Context can be divided into four sub-types:¹

- Physical context
- Epistemic context
- Linguistic context
- Social context

Physical context refers to where the conversation takes place: the objects that are present, the actions that occur, and the physical background of the conversational situation.

Epistemic or *situational context* refers to what speakers know about the world, such as the common background that is shared by the speakers. This is crucially part of the epistemic knowledge when having a conversation with someone.

Linguistic context, or discourse refers to what has been said already in the utterance. For instance, if we start a discussion and I mention the name *Carol*, and in the next sentence I refer to her by *she* or *her*, the linguistic context lets us know that the antecedent of the pronoun *her* (the person *her* refers to) is Carol.

Social context refers to the social relationship among speakers and hearers.

1 <https://ufal.mff.cuni.cz/~hana/teaching/2013wi-ling/08-pragmatics.pdf>

TO SUM UP

– The term *context* apparently has a limitless range of potentially relevant objects. We can understand the concept looking at it in an extensional way. According to Mey (1993: 182), this can be understood in two ways:

- either as extending the individual utterances making up the text = co-text;
- or alternatively considering those utterances in their natural *habitat*. In this case, we are dealing with the larger context in which people use language.

– Two approaches to the description of context:

1. An ethnographic approach (Dell Hymes). The acronym SPEAKING = factors that must be taken into account when trying to describe what happens when people use language:

S = Setting and Scene of the exchange.

P = Participants, i.e. Speaker, Hearer and audience, or Addressor, Addressee.

E = Ends, i.e. the outcomes of an exchange as well as the personal goals.

A = Act sequence, i.e. the actual language forms that are used.

K = Keys, i.e. tone, manner.

I = Instrumentalities, i.e. the choice of channel.

N = Norms of interpretation; norms of interaction.

G = Genre.

2. The activity-type approach (Levinson)

Factors that contribute to characterizing a certain activity type:

– The goals of the participants: goals of the individuals rather than the goals of the whole speech event. The goals of one participant may be different from those of another.

– Allowable contributions: some interactions are characterized by social or legal constraints on what the participants may say. What is pragmatically interesting is the way in which people will work round these restrictions.

– The degree to which Gricean maxims are adhered to or suspended: the expectation of the way in which the maxims will be observed varies considerably from culture to culture and from activity type to activity type.

– Turn-taking and topic control: to what degree an individual can exploit turn-taking norms in order to control an interaction, establish his or her own agenda (topic of conversation), etc.

Types of context

– Physical context

– Epistemic (situational) context

– Linguistic context (discourse)

– Social context

POLITENESS THEORY

Keywords and concepts: *politeness, face, face wants, a face-threatening act (FTA), a face-saving act, politeness strategies, bald on-record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and off-record-indirect strategy, Geoffrey Leech's politeness principle, negative and positive politeness, Leech's maxims*

6.1. An introduction to the problem of politeness

Besides co-operation, most interactions are governed by politeness, that is to say by what is considered a *polite social behaviour* within a certain culture.¹ It is generally accepted that much of what people say, a great deal of what they communicate is determined by their social relationships. The most influential Politeness Theory was developed by P. Brown and S. Levinson (1987). Their politeness theory examines the ways in which speakers and hearers use conversational implicature to fulfil the *face wants* of higher-status participants in conversation. Another politeness theory was proposed by G. Leech, whose ideas rely heavily on Grice's CP, though Leech increases the number of the maxims by six.

“Pragmatic approaches to the study of politeness begin to appear in the mid-1970s. Robin Lakoff (1973) provided pioneering work by linking Politeness (with its three rules: ‘do not impose’; ‘give options’; ‘make the other person feel good, be friendly’) to Grice’s Cooperative Principle to explain why speakers do not always conform to maxims such as Clarity.... In a similar vein, but wider scope, Leech’s (1983) model postulates that deviations from the Gricean conversational maxims are motivated by interactional goals, and posits a parallel Politeness Principle, articulated in a number of maxims such as Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy. He also envisages a number of scales: cost-benefit, authority and social distance, optionality, and indirectness, along which degrees of politeness can be measured. Different situations demand different levels of politeness because certain immediate illocutionary goals can compete with (e.g., in ordering), coincide with (e.g., in offering), conflict with (e.g., in threatening), or be indifferent to (e.g., in asserting) the long-term social goals of maintaining comity and avoiding friction. This so-called conversational maxim view of politeness ... is concerned uniquely with scientific analyses of politeness

as a general linguistic and pragmatic principle of communication, aimed at the maintenance of smooth social relations and the avoidance of conflict, but not as a locally determined system of social values Another model, proposed by Brown and Levinson in 1978, de facto set the research agenda for the following quarter of a century (the study was republished in its entirety as a monograph with the addition of a critical introduction in 1987).

Like Lakoff and Leech, Brown and Levinson (1987) accept the Gricean framework, but they note a qualitative distinction between the Cooperative Principle and the politeness principles: while the former is presumed by speakers to be at work all the time, politeness needs to be ostensibly communicated. Brown and Levinson see politeness as a rational and rule-governed aspect of communication, a principled reason for deviation from efficiency and aimed predominantly at maintaining social cohesion via the maintenance of individuals' public face.... Brown and Levinson's 'face' is construed as a double want: a want of freedom of action and freedom from impositions (this is called 'negative' face), and a want of approval and appreciation (a 'positive' face)." (Mey, 2009: 707)

Linguistic interaction is always social interaction as well. As Yule (1996: 59–60) puts it, there are a lot of factors related to social distance or social closeness. Some of these factors are prior to the starting of an interaction. Hence, one can refer to *external factors* which involve issues like the relative status of participants, based on social values tied to things like age, power, and status. In a wide range of interactions, especially those with strangers, the social distance is determined predominantly by external factors (the use of addressee forms including a title and last name for people perceived of higher status, Mrs. Clinton, not Mrs. Hillary).

Another set of factors, the so-called *internal factors* (amount of imposition, degree of friendliness) are negotiated during the interaction, and they can result in the initial social distance changing and being marked as less, or more, during its course (the movement from a title-plus-last name to a first-name basis within the talk). Both types of factors influence what we say and how we are interpreted. The interpretation of what people say goes beyond the literal meaning of utterances, it includes evaluations like rude, inconsiderate, considerate, tactful, etc. The impact of these evaluations is tremendous, and the investigation of this impact is carried out in terms of politeness.

6.1.1. Defining politeness

Politeness can be defined as culture-dependent etiquette or polite social behaviour. There are a number of general principles for politeness within particular cultures; among these we mention tactfulness, generosity, modesty, and being sympathetic towards others. "Participants in social interactions are generally aware of these principles that are at work in the society at large.

Language serves many purposes, and expressing linguistic politeness is only one of them. Different cultures have different ways of expressing consideration for others, and the most influential work in the area of linguistic politeness, namely Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory, adopts a definition of politeness that attempts to encompass the ways politeness is expressed universally.... Hence, their definition of politeness includes behavior which actively expresses concern for and interest in others, as well as non-imposing distancing behavior. Linguistic politeness may therefore take the form of a compliment or an expression of goodwill or camaraderie, or it may take the form of a mitigated or hedged request, or an apology for encroaching on someone's time or space." (Mey, 2009: 711)

In Alan Cruse's words, "politeness is, first and foremost, a matter of what is said, and not a matter of what is thought or believed." (Cruse, 2011: 426)

In Yule's words, politeness can be defined as "the means employed to show awareness of another person's face. In this sense, politeness can be accomplished in situations of social distance or closeness. Showing awareness for another person's face, when that other seems socially distant is often described in terms of respect or deference. Showing the equivalent awareness when the other is socially close is often described in terms of friendliness, camaraderie, or solidarity." (Yule, 1996: 60)

6.1.2. Face wants

There is also a more narrowly specified type of politeness at work, the definition of which involves the concept of *face*. Face is a technical term used to designate the *public self-image of a person* (Yule, 1996: 60). Face refers to the emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects to be recognized by the others.

When involved in daily social interactions, people generally behave as if their expectations concerning their *public self-image*, or their *face wants*, will be respected. If a person says something that sounds like a threat to another person's expectations regarding self-image, it is called a *face-threatening act* (FTA). If an action is interpreted as a threat to another person's face, and a speaker says something to lessen the possible threat, it is called a *face-saving act*.

Let us consider the following situation: a young neighbour plays loud music late at night; an old couple decides to ask him to stop, the first performing a face-threatening act, while the second one proposing a face-saving act:

I'm going to tell him to stop that awful noise right now.

Perhaps you could just ask him if he is going to stop soon because it's getting a bit late and people need to get to sleep. (Yule, 1996: 61)

6.1.3. Negative and positive face

“A person’s *negative face* is the need to be independent, to have freedom of action, and not to be imposed on by others. The word negative here does not mean bad, it’s just the opposite pole from positive. A person’s *positive face* is the need to be accepted, even liked, by others, to be treated as a member of the same group, and to know that his or her wants are shared by others. In simple terms, negative face is the need to be independent and positive face is the need to be connected.” (Yule, 1996: 62)

Yule defines *negative politeness* as situations in which “a face saving act which is oriented to the person’s negative face will tend to show deference, emphasize the importance of the other’s time or concerns, and even include an apology for the imposition or interruption.” (Yule, 1996: 62) *Positive politeness*, on the other hand, is “a face saving act which is concerned with the person’s positive face will tend to show solidarity, emphasize that both speakers want the same thing, and that they have a common goal.” (Yule, 1996: 62)

A positive politeness strategy leads the speaker to appeal to a common goal, and even friendship, by using expressions like:

How about, I’d appreciate it if you could...

How about letting me use your bike?

Hey, buddy, I’d appreciate it if you’d let me use your bike.

To avoid a refusal, which is highly probable when applying positive politeness strategies, some *getting to know you talk* is used to establish the common ground for this strategy: “Hi. How’s it going? Okay if I sit here? We must be interested in the same crazy stuff. You take a lot of notes too, huh? Say, do me a big favour and let me use one of your pens.” (Yule, 1996: 64)

In most English-speaking contexts, a face-saving act is performed *via* a negative politeness strategy, like the ones containing a modal verb (*can, could, may, would*, etc). Such negative politeness strategies are expressed mainly through questions, even questions that seem to ask for permission to ask a question:

May I ask you whether you could lend me your pen?

I’m sorry to bother you, but can I ask you for a pen?

Politeness strategies often flout the maxim of quantity, but seem to comply with the maxim of quality. The longer the utterance is, the more polite it is. Namely, more form is associated with more meaning, i.e. more respect, more politeness, whereas less form is associated with less meaning, i.e. less respect, less politeness. An utterance like *No smoking* is less polite, or rather impolite through the use of the imperative mood, while *Don’t smoke, will you?* Or *Would you mind not smoking here, please* are more polite. Other examples of polite request on not smoking are even longer:

Customers are asked to refrain from smoking if they can. (notice at Harrods)

We would appreciate if you could refrain from smoking cigars and pipes as it can be disturbing to other diners. Thank you. (notice at Clos du Roi, in Bath).²

Politeness basically means acknowledging the other's identity, respecting each other's face, i.e. a person's public self-image. Communicators want to keep face and not to lose it; they often have to determine, as they speak, the relative social distance, i.e. their face wants, between them. Thus, we can talk about positive *face* when others like, respect, and approve of us, and of *negative face* when we feel that others cannot constrain us in any way. Both of these may be threatened when someone makes a request of us. This causes a dilemma, as if I ask in a pleasant way, positive face is satisfied but negative face may lead them to think they can take advantage of us. The reverse is also true, as defensive talk will threaten the positive face. Politeness means acting to help save face for others.³

6.2. Brown and Levinson's theory

6.2.1. Basic concepts of the theory

Perhaps the most thorough treatment of the concept of politeness is that of Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, which was first published in 1978 and then reissued in 1987. Stephen C. Levinson is a linguist and anthropologist, the director of the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics. "Brown and Levinson's politeness theory was set out in their 1978 article 'Universals in language usage: Some politeness phenomena', which was later reprinted in an extended form as a book, 'Politeness: some universals in language usage.'" (Allot, 2010: 222)

In their model, politeness is defined as *redressive action taken to counter-balance the disruptive effect of face-threatening acts (FTAs)*.⁴ "Brown and Levinson's positive and negative face is a cognitive, abstract, culture-dependent construct attributable to a rational agent; it makes extensive use of Durkheim's negative (avoidance) rituals. The dualistic notion of face and the emphasis on negative face and the notion of 'imposition' have attracted extensive criticism in subsequent Chinese and Japanese studies of politeness, as well as among other non Anglo-American scholars. Although Brown and Levinson acknowledge Durkheim as their source for negative and positive rites, their understanding of the sociologist's original concepts is substantively altered in their model; their ideal rational actor is busy protecting own and others' face, rather than giving, enhancing, or maintaining face. Emotions, when accounted for, are also means of face-protection." (Mey, 2009: 262)

2 Examples adapted from: http://www.academia.edu/9794461/Cognitive_Exploration_of_Language_and_Linguistics_CLIP_1_revised

3 <http://changingminds.org/explanations/theories/politeness.htm>

4 <http://www.universalteacher.org.uk/lang/pragmatics.htm>, <http://www.questia.com>, www.uniroma2.it/.../POLITENESS.doc

In Brown's and Levinson's view, communication is quite often potentially dangerous and antagonistic. The basic notion of their model is *face*. This is defined as *the public self-image that every member of society wants to claim for himself*. In everyday conversation, there are ways to go about getting the things we want. When we are with a group of friends, we can say to them, *Go get me that plate!* or *Shut-up!* However, when we are surrounded by a group of adults, we must say *Could you please pass me that plate, if you don't mind?* and *I'm sorry, I don't mean to interrupt, but I am not able to hear the speaker in the front of the room*. In different social situations, we adjust our use of words to fit the occasion. According to Brown and Levinson, politeness strategies are developed in order to save the hearers' face. Face refers to the respect that an individual has for him or herself, and maintaining that self-esteem in public or in private situations. Usually, you try to avoid embarrassing the other person or making them feel uncomfortable. Face-Threatening Acts (FTA's) are acts that infringe on the hearers' need to maintain his/her self-esteem, and be respected. Politeness strategies are developed for the main purpose of dealing with these FTA's. In their interpretation, face consists of two related aspects. One is *negative face*, or the rights to territories, freedom of action and freedom from imposition – wanting your actions not to be constrained or inhibited by others. The other is *positive face*, the positive consistent self-image that people have and their desire to be appreciated and approved of by at least some other people.⁵

The rational actions people take to preserve both kinds of face, for themselves and the people they interact with, add up to politeness. Brown and Levinson also argue that in human communication, either spoken or written, people tend to maintain one another's face continuously.

In everyday conversation, we adapt our utterances to different situations. Among friends, we take liberties or say things that would seem discourteous among strangers. In both situations, we try to avoid making the hearer embarrassed or uncomfortable.

Levinson defined positive face in two ways: as *the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others*, or alternately, *the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants*.

Negative face was defined as *the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others*, or *the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction--i.e. the freedom of action and freedom from imposition*.⁶

Brown characterized positive face by desires to be liked, admired, ratified, and related to positively, noting that one would threaten positive face by ignoring

5 <http://eprints.iainsalatiga.ac.id/843/2/chapter%202.pdf>

6 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politeness_theory, <http://www.questia.com>, www.uniroma2.it/.../POLITENESS.doc

someone. At the same time, she characterized negative face by the desire not to be imposed upon, noting that negative face could be impinged upon by imposing on someone. Positive face refers to one's self-esteem, while negative face refers to one's freedom to act. The two aspects of face are the basic wants in any social interaction, and so during any social interaction, co-operation is needed amongst the participants to maintain each others' faces.

6.2.2. Face-threatening acts

According to Brown and Levinson, positive and negative faces exist universally in society. In social interactions, face-threatening acts (FTAs) are at times inevitable based on the terms of the conversation. A face-threatening act is an act that inherently damages the face of the addressee or the speaker by acting in opposition to the wants and desires of the other. Most of these acts are verbal, however, they can also be conveyed in the characteristics of speech (such as tone, inflection, etc.) or in non-verbal forms of communication.

Negative face-threatening acts

Negative face is threatened when a person does not avoid or intend to avoid the obstruction of their interlocutor's freedom of action. It can cause damage to either the speaker or the hearer, and it makes one of the interlocutors submit their will to the other. Freedom of choice and action are impeded when someone's negative face is threatened.

- Negative face-threatening acts damaging the hearer

- An act that affirms or denies a future act of the hearer or creates pressure on the hearer to either perform or not perform a certain act.

Examples: *orders, requests, suggestions, pieces of advice, reminders, threats, or warnings.*

- An act that expresses the speaker's sentiments relative to the hearer or the hearer's belongings.

Examples: *compliments, expressions of envy or admiration, or expressions of strong negative emotion toward the hearer (e.g. hatred, anger, lust).*

- An act that expresses some positive future act of the speaker towards the hearer. In doing so, pressure is put on the hearer to accept or reject the act.

Examples: *offers and promises.*

- Negative face-threatening acts damaging the speaker

- An act that shows that the speaker is succumbing to the power and will of the hearer.

Examples: *expressing thanks, accepting a thank you or apology, excuses, acceptance of offers, response to the hearer's violation of social etiquette and politeness, the speaker commits himself to something he or she does not want to do.*

Positive face-threatening acts

Positive face is threatened when the speaker or hearer does not care about their interlocutor's feelings, wants, or does not want what the other wants. Positive face-threatening acts can cause damage to the speaker or the hearer.

- Positive face-threatening acts damaging the hearer:

- An act that expresses the speaker's negative assessment of the hearer's positive face or an element of his/her positive face. The speaker can display this disapproval in two ways: either directly or indirectly indicating that he dislikes some aspect of the hearer's possessions, desires, or personal attributes, or by stating or implying that the hearer is wrong, irrational, or misguided.

Examples: *expressions of disapproval (e.g. insults, accusations, complaints), contradictions, disagreements, or challenges.*

- An act that expresses the speaker's indifference or lack of care toward the hearer's positive face.

- The hearer might be embarrassed by the speaker.

- The hearer might be afraid of the speaker.

Examples: *excessively emotional expressions.*

- The speaker indicates that he does not have the same values or fears as the hearer.

Examples: *disrespect, mention of topics which are inappropriate in general or in the context.*

- The speaker shows signs that he disregards the emotional well-being of the hearer.

Examples: *belittling or boasting.*

- The speaker induces a face-threatening by bringing up sensitive subjects.

Examples: *topics related to politics, race, sex, religion, etc.*

- The speaker indicates that he is indifferent and/or non-co-operative to the positive face wants of the hearer.

Examples: *interruptions, non-sequiturs.*

- The speaker misidentifies the hearer, either accidentally or intentionally, in an offensive or embarrassing way. Generally, this is done with the misuse of address terms in relation to status, gender, or age.

Example: *Addressing a young woman as "madam" instead of "miss."*

- Positive face-threatening acts damaging the speaker

- An act that shows that the speaker is in some sense wrong and unable to control himself.

Examples: *apologies, acceptance of a compliment, inability to control one's physical self, inability to control one's emotional self, self-humiliation, confessions.*⁷

⁷ Most of the examples, explanations, and situations above have been taken or adapted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politeness_theory, <http://www.questionia.com>,

6.2.3. Politeness strategies

In order to better understand politeness strategies, let us consider the following situation:

Suppose I see a crate of beer in my neighbour's house. Being thirsty, I might say:

1. *I want some beer.*
2. *Is it OK for me to have a beer?*
3. *Would it be possible for me to have a beer?*
4. *It's so hot. It makes you really thirsty.*⁸

Brown and Levinson approach human politeness behaviour in terms of four strategies: *bald on-record*, *negative politeness*, *positive politeness*, and *off-record-indirect* strategy.

1. The *bald on-record strategy* does nothing to minimize threats to the hearer's "face" (*I want some beer*). Bald on-record strategies usually do not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer's face. Often, such a strategy will shock or embarrass the addressee, and so this strategy is most often used in situations where the speaker has a close relationship with the audience, such as family or close friends.

Other examples of bald on-record strategy are:

- Emergency or desperation: *Help! Watch out!*
- Task-oriented utterances: *Give me those! Pass me the hammer.*
- Requests: *Put your jacket away.*
- Alerting or doing the FTA is in the interest of the hearer: *Turn your lights on!* (while driving); *Your headlights are on!*
- Other instances in which threat minimizing does not occur:
 - Speaking as if great efficiency is necessary: *Hear me out:...*
 - Little or no desire to maintain someone's face: *Don't forget to clean the blinds!*
- Instances in which the threat is minimized implicitly:
 - Welcomes: *Come in.*
 - Offers: *Leave it, I'll clean up later; Eat!*

2. The *positive politeness strategy* shows you that your hearer has a face to be respected. It also confirms that the relationship is friendly and expresses group reciprocity (*Is it ok for me to have a beer?*). Positive politeness strategies minimize the threat to the hearer's positive face. They are used to make the hearer feel good about himself. Positive politeness strategies are used in situations where the audience knows each other quite well. Strategies of positive politeness include hedging and attempts to avoid open conflict, statements of friendship, showing solidarity, compliments. Other examples of positive politeness are:

www.uniroma2.it/.../POLITENESS.doc

8 <http://www.teachit.co.uk/armoore/lang/pragmatics>.

- Attending to the hearer's interests, needs, wants: *You must be hungry; it's been a long time since breakfast. How about some lunch?; You look sad. Can I do anything?*
- Avoiding disagreement: A: *What is she, small?* B: *Yes, yes, she's small, smallish, um, not really small but certainly not very big.*
- Assuming agreement: *So when are you coming to see us?*
- Hedging opinion: *You really should sort of try harder.*
- Using solidarity in-group identity markers: *Hey, mate, can you lend me a dollar?*
- Being optimistic: *I'll just come along, if you don't mind.*
- Including both speaker and hearer in activity: *If we help each other, I guess, we'll both sink or swim in this course.*
- Offering or promising: *If you wash the dishes, I'll vacuum the floor.*
- Exaggerating interest in hearer and his interests: *That's a nice haircut you got; where did you get it?*
- Joking: *Wow, that's a whopper!*⁹

3. The *negative politeness strategy* recognizes the hearer's face, but it also admits that you are in some way imposing on him/her (*I don't want to bother you, but would it be possible for me to have a beer?*). Negative politeness strategies are oriented towards the hearer's negative face and they tend to avoid imposition on the hearer. These negative politeness strategies presume that the speaker will be imposing on the listener and that is why there is a high potential for linguistic awkwardness or embarrassment. Other examples of negative politeness are:

- Being indirect: *I'm looking for a pen. Would you know where Oxford Street is?*
- Requesting forgiveness: *You must forgive me but... Could I borrow your pen?*
- Minimizing imposition: *I just wanted to ask you if I could use your pen; just want to ask you if I could use your computer?; It's not too much out of your way, just a couple of blocks.*
- Pluralizing the person responsible by using plural pronouns: *We forgot to tell you that you needed to buy your plane ticket by yesterday. We regret to inform you.*
- Using hedges or questions: *Perhaps, he might have taken it, maybe. Could you please pass the rice?*
- Being pessimistic: *You couldn't find your way to lending me a thousand dollars, could you?*
- Using obviating structures such as nominalizations, passives, or statements of general rules: *I hope offense will not be taken. Visitors sign the ledger. Spitting will not be tolerated.*
- Apologizing: *I'm sorry; it's a lot to ask, but can you lend me a thousand dollars?*

One of the most common situations in which negative politeness strategies are found at work includes asking for a favour. Thus, favour-seeking, or a speaker

9 Most of the examples above have been taken or adapted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politeness_theory and <http://www.questia.com>, www.uniroma2.it/.../POLITENESS.doc

asking the hearer for a favour, relies on the use of negative politeness strategies. There are three main stages in favour-seeking: the preparatory phase, the focal phase, and the final phase:

a. The preparatory phase is when the favour-seeking is preceded by elaborate precautions against loss or damage of the speaker's or hearer's face. This phase often involves opening markers used to clarify the situation (e.g. *You see*, or *so*). The request and imposition are often softened or made less direct (e.g. the usage of past continuous *I was wondering*; of informal tag questions *What d'you reckon?*).

b. The focal stage is subdivided into elements such as asker's reasons or constraints (e.g. *I've tried everywhere but can't get one*), the other's face (e.g. *You're the only person I can turn to*).

c. The final stage includes anticipatory thanks, promises, and compliments (e.g. *I knew you would say yes. You're an angel.*)¹⁰

4. *Off-record indirect strategies* lower the pressure. In this case, you avoid the direct FTA of asking for a beer. You would rather it be offered to you once your hearer sees that you want one (*It's so hot, it makes you really thirsty.*). This strategy uses indirect language and removes the speaker from the potential to be imposing. For example, a speaker using the indirect strategy might merely say "*wow, it's getting cold in here*" insinuating that it would be great if the listener got up and turned up the heating without directly asking the listener to do so.

Other examples of off-record (indirect) strategies are:

– Giving hints: *It's a bit cold in here.*

– Being vague: *Perhaps someone should open the window; Perhaps someone should have been more responsible.*

– Being sarcastic or joking: *Yeah, it's really hot here; Yeah, he's a real Einstein.*

These strategies are not universal – they vary across cultures. For example, in some middle-eastern societies, the off-record-indirect strategy will place on the hearer a social obligation to give away anything one admires. So, speakers learn not to express admiration for expensive and valuable things in homes that they visit. Thus, in Egypt, for instance, it is not advisable to praise someone's vase, as the host will feel the need to offer it as a present.

Politeness strategies are developed for the main purpose of dealing with these FTA's.

Let us take the following example:

What would you do if you saw a cup of pens on your teacher's desk, and you wanted to use one? Would you:

a. say *Ooh, I want to use one of those!* (The bald on-record strategy has been used, which provides no effort to minimize threats to your teachers' face.)

¹⁰ Most of the examples, explanations, and situations above have been taken or adapted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politeness_theory, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politeness_theory, <http://www.questionia.com>

b. say *So, is it O.K. if I use one of those pens?* (The positive politeness strategy has been used. In this situation, you recognize that your teacher has a desire to be respected. It also confirms that the relationship is friendly and expresses group reciprocity).

c. say *I'm sorry to bother you but, I just wanted to ask you if I could use one of those pens?* (The negative politeness strategy has been used, which is similar to positive politeness in that you recognize that they want to be respected; however, you also assume that you are in some way imposing on them. Some other examples would be to say *I don't want to bother you but...* or *I was wondering if...*).

d. indirectly say *Hmm, I sure could use a blue pen right now.* (The off-record indirect strategy has been used. The main purpose is to take some of the pressure off. You are trying not to directly impose by asking for a pen. Instead, you would rather it be offered to you once the teacher realizes you need one, and you are looking to find one. A great example of this strategy is something that almost everyone has done or will do when you have, on purpose, decided not to return someone's phone call, therefore you say *I tried to call a hundred times, but there was never any answer.*)¹¹

"There are a number of ways in which politeness impacts on speech acts, including the degree to which requests, criticisms and some other speech acts are made indirectly, and the use of honorifics and other socially deictic terms and of euphemisms. Indirectness can be a way of softening the abruptness of a request, and is implemented in different ways in different languages, depending partly on the resources of the language and partly as a matter of convention." (Allot, 2010: 141)

6.2.4. Choice of strategy. Face and politeness strategies

Paul Grice argues that all conversationalists are rational beings, who are primarily interested in conveying messages efficiently. Brown and Levinson use this argument and state that rational agents will choose the same politeness strategy as any other would under the same circumstances to try to mitigate face. They show the available range of verbal politeness strategies people can rely on to manage loss or damage of face. The social factors that interfere in people's choice of strategy are social distance (symmetric relation) and power relations between parties (asymmetric relation). We need to distinguish kin or friend from a stranger with whom you may be of the same social status, but who is still separated by social distance.¹²

Different face-threatening acts are used depending on the social distance between interlocutors, for example: we may use less elaborate positive strategies

11 Examples and explanations adapted from: <http://www.teachit.co.uk/armoore/lang/pragmatics>, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politeness_theory, <http://www.questia.com>, <http://www.mona.uwi.edu/dllp/linguistics/politeness.htm>

12 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politeness_theory

or we may choose to use positive rather than negative politeness when speaking with family, but we are inclined to speak to our social equals differently than those whose status is higher or lower than our own in a given situation. For instance, if a professor is working in her office and people are being very loud and disruptive in the next room, she will go over there and tell them to be quiet but the way she does it will differ depending on who it is. If they are students, she will use the bald on-record strategy to make sure there is no confusion in what she is asking: *Stop talking so loud!* If they are colleagues, she will claim common ground with them using the positive politeness strategy or frame an indirect request for them to stop talking: *I'm working on a lecture and it's really hard to concentrate with all this noise.* If they are really high-status directors of the department, she may end up saying nothing at all or apologize for interrupting them.¹³

Face refers to the speaker's sense of *social identity*. Any speech act may impose on this sense, and be therefore *face threatening*. Speakers have strategies for lessening the threat.

Positive politeness means being complimentary and gracious to the addressee (yet, if this is overdone, the speaker may alienate the interlocutor). Negative politeness is found in the various ways of mitigating an imposition.¹⁴

Negative politeness can take the form of:

- Hedging: *Er, could you, er, perhaps, close the, um, window?*
- Pessimism: *I don't suppose you could close the window, could you?*
- Indicating deference: *Excuse me, sir, would you mind if I asked you to close the window?*
- Apologizing: *I'm terribly sorry to disturb you, but could you close the window?*

– Impersonalizing: *The management requires all windows to be closed.*¹⁵

“Negative politeness mitigates the effect of belittling expressions:

Help me move this piano.

You couldn't possibly give me a hand with this piano, could you?

Positive politeness emphasizes the hearer's positive status:

Thank you, that was extremely helpful.” (Cruse, 2011: 426)

All in all, Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson postulate that linguistic politeness is governed by “the desire to preserve face ... the image that a person has as a member of society ... Negative face is related to the desire to be free to pursue one's goals; positive face is the desire to be liked... Positive politeness is the expression of solidarity; negative politeness is the expression of restraint.” (Allot, 2010: 143–144)

13 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politeness_theory

14 www.uniroma2.it/.../POLITENESS.doc, <http://www.teachit.co.uk/armoore/lang/pragmatics>

15 <http://www.teachit.co.uk/armoore/lang/pragmatics>, www.scribd.com/doc/153261635/Theory-of-Politeness

6.3. Geoffrey Leech's politeness principle

6.3.1. Leech's model of politeness

“One of the most fully developed alternative frameworks is Geoffrey Leech's model, which was developed at about the same time as Brown and Levinson's (Leech, 1983), and which shares many of the assumptions of their approach, as well as their goal of universality, but takes a somewhat different tack in analyzing linguistic politeness. Rather than focusing on ‘face needs,’ Leech addressed the issue of “why people are often so indirect in conveying what they mean” ... To answer this question, (i.e., basically to account for why people do not consistently follow Grice's Cooperative Principle and adhere to his Maxims ... Leech proposed a Politeness Principle (PP), and a set of maxims which he regards as paralleling Grice's Maxims. Leech's PP states:

Minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs. ... Maximize (other things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs (1983: 81).” (Mey, 2009: 716)

The politeness principle, in Geoffrey Leech's view, is a series of maxims, which Leech has proposed as a way of explaining how politeness operates in conversational exchanges. Leech defines politeness as a type of behaviour that allows the participants to engage in social interaction in an atmosphere of relative harmony. In stating his own maxims, Leech uses his own terms for two kinds of illocutionary acts.¹⁶ He calls *representatives assertives* and calls *directives impositives*. Each of these maxims is accompanied by a sub-maxim (between square brackets), which is of less importance. They all support the idea that negative politeness (avoidance of discord) is more important than positive politeness (seeking concord). Not all of the maxims are equally powerful and important. For instance, *tact* influences what we say more powerfully than does *generosity*, while *approbation* is more important than *modesty*. Speakers may adhere to more than one maxim of politeness at the same time. Often one maxim is on the forefront of the utterance, while a second maxim is implied.¹⁷

The ways in which people express or negotiate politeness is obviously influenced by a range of socio-cultural variables, “including power relationships, degrees of solidarity, intimacy, or social distance, the level of formality of the interaction or speech event, the gender, age, ethnicity, and social class backgrounds of participants, and so on..... Locher (2004) examines the interaction of power and politeness in the expression of disagreements in a family, at a business meeting, and in a political interview involving President Clinton. She demonstrates that power is most usefully regarded as dynamic, relational, and contestable, and that while participants of very different statuses

16 <http://www.teachit.co.uk/armoore/lang/pragmatics>

17 www.uniroma2.it/.../POLITENESS.doc

exercise power as well as politeness in their use of discourse in context, status tends to influence the degree of negotiability of a disagreement in an interaction, along with many other factors, including the topic's degree of controversiality, the participants' degree of familiarity with the topic, and their speaking style, cultural backgrounds, and gender. She also notes great variability in the amount and degree, and even the discursive positioning, of politeness or relational work which accompanies the exercise of power in disagreements in the interaction..... Mills (2003) also discusses the relevance of politeness as a factor in the construction of gender identity, especially in British English society. Holmes and Stubbe (2003) describe the interaction of power and politeness in a wide range of New Zealand workplaces, and Harris (2003) applies politeness theory to talk collected in British magistrates' courts, doctors' surgeries, and a police station. Researchers taking this approach highlight the complexities of spoken interaction, and the importance of taking account of the differing and intersecting influences of different social factors (e.g., age, ethnicity, social class, gender) as well as contextual factors (e.g., power and social distance relations, social and institutional role, formality of the speech event, and speech activity) in accounting for the complex ways in which politeness is expressed and interpreted in the very different situations they analyze." (Mey, 2009: 719)

6.3.2. Leech's maxims

If politeness is not communicated, we can assume that the politeness is absent from communication. Leech formulated his maxims as follows:

- *Tact maxim* (in directives and commissives): minimize cost to other; [maximize benefit to other];
- *Generosity maxim* (in directives and commissives): minimize benefit to self; [maximize cost to self];
- *Approbation maxim* (in expressives and representatives [assertives]): minimize dispraise of other; [maximize praise of other];
- *Modesty maxim* (in expressives and representatives): minimize praise of self; [maximize dispraise of self];
- *Agreement maxim* (in representatives): minimize disagreement between self and other; [maximize agreement between self and other];
- *Sympathy maxim* (in representatives): minimize antipathy between self and other; [maximize sympathy between self and other].¹⁸

The many comments that have been made relative to Brown and Levinson's theory suggest alternative approaches to politeness. For instance, Grice and Leech dedicated their research to the complexity of politeness issues. Grice proposed the conversational 'maxim' as normative rules of interaction: quantity,

18 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politeness_maxims, www.uniroma2.it/.../POLITENESS.doc

quality, relevance, and manner. Leech, after elaborating Grice's maxims, sets a politeness principle that offers the more general model than Grice's maxims. Leech identifies the maxims of tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy.

What makes Leech's principle of politeness somewhat different from Grice and Brown and Levinson's theories is that he addressed more the issue of the reasons for which people are often so indirect in conveying what they mean. Particular groups of people have different ways of speaking. In social settings, most people usually use a variety of linguistic expressions to show politeness to those they are familiar with. Linguistic politeness is, in fact, a type of linguistic behaviour that people use to express concern for and interest in others.¹⁹ Basically, the Brown and Levinson's theory is based on three principle notions: face, face-threatening act (FTA), and politeness strategies. Politeness strategies refer to a behaviour that can preserve a person's positive self-image and avoid imposing on a person's freedom.

Politeness is directly linked to having or showing good manners and respect for the feelings of others.²⁰ According to Brown and Levinson, people's faces are human properties that are comparable to self-esteem. Positive face indicates the similarities among people and appreciates the interlocutor's public self-image.²¹ Negative face can be expressed by preserving one's personal right of freedom of action and freedom from imposition. Socially inappropriate behaviour is a potential threat to people's public self-image, i.e. their face, and this means that they risk being humiliated or being put in embarrassing situations. According to Cruse (2011: 426), the purpose of politeness is the maintenance of harmonious and smooth social relations. Nevertheless, the co-operative principle and the politeness principle can be considered "as mutually restraining influences, as the nature of our social, psychological and physical reality constrains the scope for politeness." (Cruse, 2011: 426)

In order to avoid conflict and respect people's freedom of thought, and thus maintain the harmonious relations with others, politeness strategies can be implemented in conversation. For example, people can soften a request by avoiding bare imperatives to maintain a positive or negative face in a conversational situation. Therefore, it is suggested that behaving appropriately, that is assuming to match the speakers' and addressees' need or wish, can preserve either positive or negative self-image of the speaker or the hearer. "In some languages (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean), choice of stylistic level and address forms are largely a matter of social convention or 'linguistic etiquette'; respect or deference is encoded in certain linguistic forms which are required when talking to one's elders or those of higher status, for instance.... So, in assessing politeness,

19 <http://spotcorner.wordpress.com>

20 <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/polite>

21 <http://spotcorner.wordpress.com>

Chinese participants, for instance, evaluate both whether an appropriate degree of socially prescribed respect or deference has been expressed, as well as the extent to which the addressee's face needs are addressed discursively in any specific interaction... By contrast, in communities where social relationships are not marked so formally or encoded so explicitly in the grammar or lexicon, politeness is expressed somewhat differently. Greek interactants' view of politeness, for instance, focuses around expressions of concern, consideration, friendliness, and intimacy, rather than imposition avoidance and distance maintenance... Moroccan Arabic culture places greater weight on positive politeness than does the British English culture, which often functions implicitly as the unacknowledged norm in politeness research. Overall, then, it is apparent that the area of the cross-cultural expression of linguistic politeness requires careful negotiation, with the ever-present danger of ethnocentric assumptions' constant potential minefield. Nonetheless, the burgeoning of research in this area in recent years, especially involving Asian researchers, suggests that better understandings of what is meant by linguistic politeness in different cultures are steadily being forged." (Mey, 2009: 720–721)

According to Brown and Levinson, the seriousness of face-threatening that is caused by an inappropriate behaviour can be assessed. The factors that influence that face-threatening involve three fundamental socio-cultural variables: the social distance (D) between the participants, the power (P) that the addressee has over the speaker, and the ranking of the imposition (R) expressed in the utterance in the relevant culture. "The politeness principle is intended to be universal, i.e. not culture-dependent, in its application. However ... the politeness maxims are given different relative weightings in different cultures, with the result that politeness phenomena in speech can have a very different superficial appearance... For instance, a British hostess will probably take a compliment on her cooking something like this: Guest *Oh, Jane, that was a delicious meal.* ... However, a Japanese hostess in a similar situation is obliged by politeness rules to deny any merit whatsoever in her efforts to entertain. This can be explained by the high weighting given to the Modesty Maxim in Japanese culture (and the relatively low weighting to the Quality maxim, since it is unlikely that the Japanese hostess actually believes her meal to have been worthless). (The rules have, I understand, been different at an earlier period in certain sections of British society, where the guest's comment would have been taken as an insult)." (Cruse, 2011: 432)

In sociolinguistics, conversation analysis (CA), and politeness theory, speech acts express concern for others and minimize threats to self-esteem (*face*) in particular social contexts. "Generally speaking, we are more concerned, as social beings, with negative politeness, as breakdowns in social harmony are much more likely as a result of the expression of belittling thoughts. Another dichotomy in politeness phenomena is between speaker-related and hearer-related effects.

Generally, speaker-oriented politeness involves self-belittlement, as any aggrandizement of self implies a relative belittling of the hearer. As a general rule, hearer-oriented politeness is more salient and more crucial.” (Cruse, 2011: 427)

Positive politeness strategies are intended to avoid giving offence by highlighting friendliness. These strategies include juxtaposing criticism with compliments, establishing common ground, and using jokes, nicknames, honorifics, tag questions, special discourse markers (*please*), and in-group jargon and slang.

Negative politeness strategies are intended to avoid giving offence by showing deference. These strategies include questioning, hedging, and presenting disagreements as opinions.

Table 3.²²

<p>A person’s negative face is the need to be independent, to have the freedom of action, not to be imposed upon by others (out-groupness). Negative politeness strategies (such as showing deference, emphasizing the other’s importance, apologizing for imposition or interruption) are applied to signal that the speakers respect each other’s negative face.</p> <p>E.g.: <i>Can you open the door, please? May I have your attention, please? Could you lend me your pencil? I’m sorry to bother you, but can I ask you for a pen?</i></p>	<p>A person’s positive face is the need to be accepted, even liked, by others, to be treated as a member of the same group, or to know that his or her wants are shared by others (in-groupness). Positive politeness strategies (such as showing solidarity, emphasizing that both speakers want the same thing, and they have a common goal) are applied to signal that the speakers respect each other; positive face.</p> <p>E.g.: <i>Let’s shut the door. We should really close the window. We don’t want to park here, do we? How about letting me use your pen? Hey, buddy, I’d appreciate it if you could let me use your pen.</i></p>
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Another related issue is *impoliteness*, which, despite being less researched, is at least as complex a matter as linguistic politeness. In her article *Politeness Revisited: The Dark Side* (Austin P. 1990. In: Bell A. & Holmes J. [eds.], *New Zealand Ways of Speaking English*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. 277–293; qtd. by Mey, 2009: 722), Austin P. draws on Relevance Theory to account for behaviour perceived as intentionally rude. She introduced the useful term Face Attack Acts for what she calls *the dark side of politeness*, namely speech acts perceived as deliberately intended to insult the addressee. She provides a fascinating range of examples; one might think that swearing at someone would

²² Some of the examples have been taken or adapted from: kreangol.hu

always qualify as impolite behaviour, but there is a range of research illustrating that swearing serves many different functions and that even when addressed to another person, it may serve a positive politeness solidarity function, rather than acting as an insult. (Mey, 2009: 722)

Politeness is not only a linguistic phenomenon; it is also a matter of other means of human communication. In pragmatics, work on politeness “is the study of the effect on language use of certain principles from another domain: the domain of socially appropriate behavior.” (Allot, 2010: 144)

TO SUM UP

- Politeness = a polite social behaviour within a certain culture.
 - Face is a technical term used to designate the public self-image of a person, the emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects to be recognized by the others.
 - People generally behave as if their expectations concerning their public self-image, or their face wants, will be respected. If a person says something that sounds like a threat to another person’s expectations regarding self-image, it is called a face-threatening act (FTA). If an action is interpreted as a threat to another person’s face, and a speaker says something to lessen the possible threat, it is called a face-saving act.
 - Negative and positive face
 - Brown and Levinson’s theory
 - Politeness is defined as redressive action taken to counter-balance the disruptive effect of *face-threatening acts* (FTAs).
 - Negative Face Threatening Acts
 - Positive Face Threatening Acts
 - Politeness strategies
1. The bald on-record strategy usually does not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer’s face; this strategy is most often utilized in situations where the speaker has a close relationship with the audience, such as family or close friends.
 2. The positive politeness strategy shows that your hearer has a face to be respected. It also confirms that the relationship is friendly and expresses group reciprocity.
 3. The negative politeness strategy recognizes the hearer’s face, but it also admits that you are in some way imposing on him/her; it is oriented towards the hearer’s negative face and emphasizes avoidance of imposition on the hearer.
 4. Off-record indirect strategies take some of the pressure off. This strategy uses indirect language and removes the speaker from the potential to be imposing.
 - Geoffrey Leech’s Politeness Principle
 - He calls *representatives* assertives, and calls *directives* impositives.

Positive politeness means being complimentary and gracious to the addressee.

Negative politeness is found in the various ways of mitigating an imposition.

– Leech's maxims:

- *Tact maxim*
- *Generosity maxim*
- *Approbation maxim*
- *Modesty maxim*
- *Agreement maxim*
- *Sympathy maxim*

– Positive politeness strategies are intended to avoid giving offence by highlighting friendliness. These strategies include juxtaposing criticism with compliments, establishing common ground, and using jokes, nicknames, honorifics, tag questions, special discourse markers (*please*), and in-group jargon and slang.

– Negative politeness strategies are intended to avoid giving offence by showing deference. These strategies include questioning, hedging, and presenting disagreements as opinions.

CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

Keywords and concepts: *conversation, conversation analysis – CA, ethno-methodology, turn-taking mechanism, turn-constructive component or turn construction units, turn-allocational component or turn distribution, adjacency pairs, preference, preferred response, dispreferred response, repair*

7.1. Defining conversation

Conversation analysis (hereafter CA) is an approach to the study of social interaction which emerged in the 1960s in the work of Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson. What distinguishes CA most clearly from other approaches is its methodology. CA research is based upon recordings (audio or audio-video) of human interaction. “Analysis proceeds by unmotivated observation: that is, without looking for anything in particular (e.g., deictic particles, honorifics, talk about politics), the researcher attempts to isolate possible practices (relatively stable ways of performing actions). CA relies on unmotivated observation for the basic reason that – in working with conversational materials – it is not possible to adequately describe what one is looking for in advance of finding a set of instances.” (Mey, 2009: 148)

Conversation is the most basic and widespread linguistic means of conducting human affairs. According to Cook (1989), conversation is the linguistic interaction which is not primarily necessitated by a practical task, in which any unequal power of participants is partially suspended, the number of participants is small, the turns are quite short, and during which talk is primarily for the participants and not for an outside audience.

Conversation analysis is the study of talk in interaction or “the study of talk”. (Coposescu, 2004: 102) “In an interesting discussion of the micro–macro problem from the viewpoint of conversation analysis, Schegloff ... asserted that interaction, minimally involving two people, is the primordial site of sociality. This view is rooted in a significant history of thought about both sociality and interaction.” (Mey, 2009: 121)

7.2. The role and importance of conversation analysis

1. CA is the study of *recorded, naturally occurring talk-in-interaction*.
2. CA is only marginally interested in language as such, but first and foremost in language as a practical *social accomplishment*.
3. Its object of study is *the interactional organization of social activities*. (Coposescu, 2004: 103)

Conversation analysis or the study of talk-in-interaction is the minute examination of samples of linguistic units produced in natural circumstances. “The aim is to catalogue and understand the repertoire of members of a speech community for the organization of talk: to understand such things as how they start and end conversations, how they take turns in conversation, how they agree on a topic, and how they change it. An extensive system of classification for acts in conversation has been developed, with its own theoretical vocabulary, for example: turn, overlap, backchannel, adjacency pair, repair, pre-sequence, insertion sequence.” (Allot, 2010: 51)

7.3. Features of talk

Harvey Sacks carried out a research between 1964 and 1975 to investigate the levels of social order that could be revealed in the everyday practice of talking. At first, his data was made up of a corpus of telephone calls to a suicidal prevention centre. The hypothesis with which the programme was begun was that ordinary conversation may be a deeply ordered, structurally organized phenomenon, and that talk could be described as characterized by order at all points.

“He observed that, in the majority of the cases, if the person taking the call within the organization started off by giving their name, then the ‘suicidal’ person who was calling would be likely to give their name in reply. But in one particular call, Sacks noticed that the caller (B) seemed to have trouble with the name of the answerer:

A: *This is Mr. Smith, may I help you?*

B: *I can’t hear you.*

A: *This is Mr. Smith.*

B: *Smith.*

Sacks observed that, for the rest of the conversation, the agent taking the call had great difficulty in getting the caller to give a name. His question then was: ‘Where in the course of the conversation could you tell that somebody would not give their name?’

Sacks noted that, on the one hand, it appears that if the name is not forthcoming at the start it may prove problematic to get. On the other hand, overt requests for it may be resisted. Then he remarked that it is possible that the

caller's declared problem in hearing is a methodical way of avoiding giving one's name in response to the other's having done so. In his analysis, Sacks shows that by 'not hearing', the caller is able to set up a sequential trajectory in which the agent finds less and less opportunity to establish the caller's name without explicitly asking for it. Thereby, the caller is able to begin the conversation by avoiding giving a name without actually refusing to do so." (Coposescu, 2004: 105–106)

Thus, Sacks concluded that conversational devices displayed some general features and functioned in essentially the same ways across various contexts. In other words, he found that conversations were not randomly carried out; instead, they rather followed certain, well-established, and organized scripts.

7.4. Ethnomethodology: observing social activities

Ethnomethodologists (among which Garfinkel, 1967) developed the so-called *ethno-methods*, believing that social activities are observable, that members of society are capable of rationally understanding and accounting for their own actions, and that researches could develop and describe the methods that people use for accounting for their own actions and those of others. What ethnomethodology wanted to prove was that conversational talk was not incoherent or irregular and, what is more, it was rule-governed, and that such rules are people's rules, rather than linguists'. To prove his point, Garfinkel conducted a research in which steady and taken-for-granted routines of ordinary life were intentionally disrupted in order to observe how people dealt with this sudden lack of certainty: "For instance, he would instruct his student 'experimenters' to engage others in interaction and then to repeatedly request the subject of the experiment to clarify whatever he or she said. Thus, on being asked 'How are you', the experimenter would ignore the routine or expected use of the question, and respond instead:

S: *How are you?*

E: *How am I in regard to what? My health, my finances, my school work, my peace of mind, my...*

S: *(Red in the face and suddenly out of control) Look! I was just trying to be polite. Frankly, I don't give a damn how you are."*

(Garfinkel, 1967: 44; qtd. by Coposescu, 2004: 107)

7.5. Basic notions of conversation analysis

7.5.1. Turn and turn-taking

Conversation involves turn-taking and that the end of one speaker's turn and the beginning of the next latch on to each other, signalling that one turn has come to an end and another should begin. Yule introduces the concepts of *floor*, *turn*, and *turn-taking*. "There is a scarce commodity called the floor which can be defined as the right to speak. Having control of this scarce commodity at any time is called a turn. In any situation where control is not fixed in advance, anyone can attempt to get control. This is called turn-taking. Any possible change-of-turn point is called a Transition Relevance Place, or TRP." (Yule, 1996: 72)

Turn-taking is one of the fundamental organizations of conversation. "Turn-taking is the set of practices through which conversation is organized and is therefore an important aspect of CA." (Baker-Ellece, 2011: 154) The term *turn* is short for *turn-constructive unit*, defined as "essentially an utterance: a meaningful component of a conversation, which might be a sentence, a phrase, a word or even a nod of the head or a conversationally encouraging noise like 'Mm-hm'." (Allot, 2010: 189)

In CA, conversation is analysed as a sequence of turns, and "turn-taking in conversation is more flexible than in chess. Turns can overlap, and while they sometimes alternate between speakers, it is also possible for a speaker to signal that she is going to continue, or even to nominate another speaker to take the next turn. The utterances or parts of utterances which do this sort of work are called *turn-allocational components*." (Allot, 2010: 190)

The turn-taking system consists of two components: the *turn-constructive component* and the *turn-allocational component*. The turn-constructive component is also called *turn construction unit*. The main features of turn construction units are, according to Coposescu (2004: 109), *projectability* and the possibility of relying on *transition relevance places*:

- *projectability* – it is possible for participants to project, in the course of a turn construction unit, what sort of unit it is and at what point it is likely to end;
- *transition relevance place* – at the end of each unit, there is the possibility for legitimate transition between speakers, and the point at which speakers may change the floor is the transition relevance place.

The *turn-allocational component* is also called *turn distribution* and it refers to who dominates the conversation in terms of number of turns taken, length of turns.

There are rules that govern speaker change or the way the floor is shared during conversation. Floor, as we have seen before, is the right to speak and be listened to. The speakers share the floor by taking turns to utilize it. Turn construction units are, therefore, these minimal units by which turns are shared.

During an interaction, if the current speaker selects the next speaker in current turn, then current speaker must stop speaking, and next speaker must speak next. Transition occurs at the first transition relevance place. If current speaker does not select next speaker, then any other party self-selects, first speaker gaining rights to the next turn. Provided that current speaker has not selected next speaker, and no other party self-selects, then current speaker may (but need not) continue. This pattern is then repeated. Where, despite the rules, overlapping talk occurs, studies revealed the operation of a system, i.e. either one speaker drops out rapidly, or as soon as one speaker thus *gets into the clear*, he typically recycles precisely the part of the turn obscured by the overlap, or if one speaker does not immediately drop out, there is available a competitive allocation system, whereby the speaker who *upgrades* most, wins the floor (upgrading means an increased amplitude, slowing tempo, lengthened vowels, etc.). (Coposescu, 2004: 109–110)

“These rules mean that generally only one person speaks at a time. Overlaps can occur as competing first starts. Alternatively, they may occur where a transition relevance place has been mis-projected, such as where a tag or address term has been appended.... Conversation analysts may be interested in cases where turn-taking appears to break down, as this may indicate something important is happening in the conversation. They may also examine how participants orient to such breakdowns and attempt to repair them.” (Baker-Ellece, 2011: 155)

7.5.2. Adjacency pairs

Adjacency pairs are certain classes of utterances that conventionally come in pairs. As Baker and Ellece define it, an adjacency pair “consists of two functionally related turns, each made by a different speaker. ... the first turn of the pair requires a relevant response (the second turn).” (Baker-Ellece, 2011: 3) Adjacency pairs may have various forms (invitation – acceptance or rejection; request – acceptance or denial; greeting–greeting; assessment–agreement; blame–denial, question–answer, etc. Here are some examples of adjacency pairs:

Summons–answer:

A: *Can I get some help here?*

B: *Certainly.*

Offer–refusal:

Shop assistant: *May I help you find something?*

Customer: *No, thank you, I'm just looking.*

Compliment–acceptance:

A: *Your hair looks very lovely today.*

B: *Thank you. I've just had it cut.*

Allot's definition of *adjacency pairs* emphasizes that “in conversational analysis, an adjacency pair is two utterances immediately after the other in sequence, where one is a response to the other. The illocutionary force of

the response or even the words used may be guided or mandated by social convention. For example, in many cultures, there is a conventional expression that follows being thanked: in Italian *Grazie/Prego*, in German *Danke/Bitte*. ... In English, there are many choices for the response to being thanked, including *Don't mention it*, *It's nothing*, *You're welcome*, *My pleasure*, and there is no social obligation to say anything. Often it is the combination of functions or illocutionary forces of the two utterances which make an adjacency pair. For example, a question is often (but not always) followed by an answer, a greeting by another greeting, a bet with an acceptance or a rejection." (Allot, 2010: 19–20)

Sometimes, inserted sequences may arise. An example of an insertion sequence can be spotted in the following conversation (adapted from Levinson, 1983):

1. A: *Can I have a can of beer?* Q. 1

B: *Are you over eighteen?* Ins. 1

A: *No.* Ins. 2

B: *Then no.* A1

Another example of insertion sequence is offered by Yule (1996) in:

Agent: *Do you want the early flight?*

Client: *What time does it arrive?*

Agent: *9.45.*

Client: *Yes, that's great.*

The inserted sequences have the purpose of deferring the answer until relevant information is available.

The absence of a second pair part from an adjacency pair is treated by the participants as a noticeable absence, and the speaker of the first part may infer a reason for the absence.

Example in a question/answer sequence:

1. Child: *Have to cut these, Mummy.* (1.3) *Won't we*

2. *Mummy.*

3. (1.5)

4. Child: *Won't we.*

5. Mother: *Yes* (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998: 42; qtd. by Coposescu 2004: 112)

7.5.3. Preference

In some adjacency pairs, there is a choice of two likely responses of which one is termed *preferred response* and the other *dispreferred response*. The concept of preference does not deal with any psychological motives of individuals, but rather with structural features of the design of turns associated with particular activities, as initial actions can be designed to invite particular kind of responses. "Generally, the preferred second is shorter, less complicated response, while the dispreferred second tends to be longer and requires more conversational work." (Baker–Ellege, 2011: 3)

E.g.:

(invitation): *Why don't you come and see me some time?*

(acceptance, preferred answer): *I would like to.*

(rejection, dispreferred answer): *Well, that's very kind of you, but I'm afraid I can't make it today, as I have a lot of work to do.*

A first part containing a request or an offer is usually delivered with the expectation that the second part will be an acceptance, as an acceptance is structurally more likely than a refusal. Preference, in fact, is this structural likelihood.

Table 4.

First part	Second part	
	Preferred	Dispreferred
Assessment	agree	disagree
Invitation	accept	refuse
Offer	accept	decline
Proposal	agree	disagree
Request	accept	refuse

(adapted from Yule, 1996)

7.5.4. The problem of repair

Repair is a generic term used in CA to cover a wide range of phenomena “from seeming errors in turn-taking, such as overlapping talk, to any of the forms of what is commonly called ‘corrections’ – that is, substantive faults in the contents of what someone has said.” (Coposescu, 2004: 120) Repair is a term referring to patterns of naturally occurring conversation in which a speaker needs to repeat or rephrase his utterance partially in order to correct what was previously said. “This can often occur when one or more participants have difficulty with speaking, hearing or understanding. Repair can involve self-repair, or another speaker can attempt to clarify or correct the first speaker’s utterance. Repair can also be marked by features such as repetition, pauses or hesitation markers such as *er* or *erm*.” (Baker-Ellece, 2011: 115)

There is a large variety of problems in conversations, such as incorrect word selection, slips of tongue, mis-hearings, and misunderstandings. Repairs usually occur in close proximity to the trouble source. The repair system embodies a distinction between the initiation of repair (marking something as a source of trouble), and the actual repair itself. Thus, there is a distinction between repair initiated by self (the speaker who produced the trouble source), and repair initiated by other. Consequently, there are four varieties of repair:

- Self-initiated self-repair: repair is both initiated and carried out by the speaker of the trouble source;

- Other-initiated self-repair: repair is carried out by the speaker of the trouble source but initiated by the recipient;
- Self-initiated other-repair: the speaker of a trouble source may try and get the recipient to repair the trouble – for example, if a name is proving troublesome to remember;
- Other-initiated other-repair: the recipient of a trouble-source turn both initiates and carries out the repair. This is the closest to what is conventionally understood by *correction*. (Coposescu, 2004: 122–125)

“Conversation analytic methodology is based upon the already discussed assumption that the sense-making devices that participants in talk-in-interaction orient to can be understood as forms of situated, interactional reasoning. ... This kind of contextual reasoning can only be investigated from within the interaction. The central requirement of CA methodology – convergence between the analyst’s perspective and the perspective of the participants – attempts to achieve this.” (Mey, 2009: 138)

Typical discourse functions include conversation invitation, turn-taking, providing feedback, contrast and emphasis, and breaking away. Then, one can establish mappings between functions and behaviours.

TO SUM UP

- CA is the study of *recorded, naturally occurring talk-in-interaction*.
 - CA is only marginally interested in language as such, but first and foremost in language as a practical *social accomplishment*.
 - Its object of study is *the interactional organization of social activities*.
 - Turn-taking
- The turn-taking model has two components:
- a. turn construction units
- Turns at talk can be seen as constructed out of units which broadly correspond to linguistic categories such as sentences, clauses, single words (e.g., *Hey!, What?*), or phrases.
- Features of turn construction units:
 - projectability – it is possible for participants to project, in the course of a turn construction unit, what sort of unit it is and at what point it is likely to end.
 - transition relevance place – at the end of each unit, there is the possibility for legitimate transition between speakers.
 - b. Turn distribution:
 - There is no strict limit to turn size, given the extendable nature of syntactic turn-constructional units.

- There is no exclusion of parties.
- The number of parties can change.
 - Adjacency pairs are utterances that are conventionally paired so that, on the production of a first pair part, the second becomes relevant and remains so, even if it is not produced in the next turn. The next turn in an adjacency pair sequence is a relevant second pair part.
 - Preference organization

In some adjacency pairs, there is a choice of two likely responses of which one is termed preferred response (because it occurs more frequently) and the other dispreferred (because it is less common).

- Repair refers to patterns of naturally occurring conversation in which a speaker needs to repeat or rephrase his utterance partially in order to correct what was previously said.

PRAGMATICS AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

Keywords and concepts: *proper interpretation of context, translation as a cultural and aesthetic act, pragmatic meaning, pragmatic text, semantic translation vs. communicative/pragmatic translation, pragmatic approach to language*

Daniela Sorea, in her book *Translation. Theory and Practice*, lists some of the main theories of meaning, among which she mentions the so-called *use* theory of meaning, strongly connected with the pragmatic view upon language. Pragmatics deals with meaning not as a mental representation, nor as a relation between a symbol (word, phrase, or the other categories) and an object or an entity designated by that symbol. “In other words, pragmatics situates language within wider social and cultural settings and behavioural patterns and, while laying heavy stress on the context of the verbal exchanges, it deals with the way people exploit words and combinations of words, with the actions actual users perform in the act of communication. The meaning of a linguistic expression is given by its use, under certain circumstances, where interlocutors nourish specific intentions and pursue specific goals.” (Sorea, 2007: 23–24) The author quotes Wittgenstein’s definition of language usage as language games, among which we find interactions like giving orders, expressing invitations, thanks, curses, greetings, praying, describing people and objects, narrating events and stories, making assumptions, speculations, fabricating lies or hypotheses, acting, telling jokes and, why not, translating from one language to another.

For translators, it is of utmost importance to situate words and phrases into specific contexts. When translating from one language into another and to avoid misinterpretation and mistranslation, it is essential to correctly identify the local context of utterances and speech acts. Specific contextual locations may provide different readings, thus different meanings, which rely heavily on the distinct configuration of spatial and temporal elements. “For instance, a very simple utterance such as *Are you going to buy this car?* may trigger, among a variety of other responses, something like *Are you nuts?* Such a reply could mean opposite things in different contexts: if the car is a bargain and meets with the buyer’s expectations, it will obviously mean *Isn’t it obvious I will?* If the car is a write-out and the required price is outrageously high, it will mean exactly the opposite: i.e. *Isn’t it obvious I won’t?* If it is April 1, and one asks *Who are you trying to kid?* This may count as an honest question, decodable as *Who is the target of*

your mystification? On any other context, *Who are you trying to kid?* could be perceived as an expression of disbelief.” (Sorea, 2007: 27)

A specific translation problem that is connected to the pragmatic meaning of utterances is failure to identify the context which makes it clear whether the meaning is literal or figurative. “In a context where participants complain of the harsh winter and biting frost, an utterance such as *You’ve got cold feet* could simply be a constative remark or maybe an expression of thoughtfulness and sympathy. In the context of a wedding which is about to take place, telling the groom *You’ve got cold feet* will indicate the groom experiencing pre-marital nervousness, eve fright.” (Sorea, 2007: 27)

When translating, a translator facilitates an act of communication between SL speakers/writers and TL hearers/readers. The guidelines that matter in the process of translation are the choice of combinations of words, the grammatical structure, the contextual meaning, and the communicative purpose of the source text. Yet, translation is not a simple linguistic conversion between languages; it is also a cultural and aesthetic act.

Communicative translation is oriented towards the needs of the TL recipient. Communicative translation contrasts with word-for-word translation, literal translation. “When producing a communicative translation, the translator is permitted greater freedom to interpret ST and will consequently smooth over irregularities of style, remove ambiguities and even correct the author’s factual errors. ... Examples of text types for which this mode of translation would be appropriate include journalistic writing, textbooks, public notices and indeed most non-literary genres.” (Shuttleworth–Cowie, 2007: 22).

According to Shuttleworth and Cowie’s *Dictionary of Translation Studies*, pragmatic translation is the kind of translation “which pays attention not only to denotative meaning but also to the way utterances are used in communicative situations and the way we interpret them in context.” (Shuttleworth–Cowie, 2007: 128) Pragmatic translation will take into account connotative meaning, allusion, and interpersonal aspects of communication such as implicature, tone, and register. Among pragmatic translations, we can cite: scientific treatises, government documents, instructions, descriptions, and directions that appear on packaged goods.

Table 5.

SEMANTIC translation	COMMUNICATIVE/ PRAGMATIC translation
Author-centred	Reader-centred
Related to thought	Related to speech
Faithful	Effective
More detailed but more awkward	Simpler, clearer

SEMANTIC translation	COMMUNICATIVE/ PRAGMATIC translation
Personal	Social
SL-biased	TL-biased
Tendency to over-translate	Tendency to under-translate
Inferior to the original	Possibly better than the original
Eternal, decontextualized	Existential, context dependent
Wide, universal	Tailor-made, targeted for a specific readership
True version	Felicitous version
Meaning-centred	Message-centred

(Sorea, 2007: 72)

Adriana Vizental defines pragmatic meaning, focusing on “the way pragmatic factors link linguistic structure to linguistic usage, i.e. on the practical use the sender makes of his background knowledge, as mirrored in the linguistic performance of the competent communicator.” (Vizental, 2006: 44) Pragmatic factors govern all the linguistic and non-linguistic choices: of words, of grammatical constructions, of tone of voice, and of both languages. Pragmatic errors do not always mean grammatical mistakes or semantic errors: for instance, an utterance like *He/She is cute* is semantically and grammatically correct but pragmatically inappropriate when talking about one’s superior. Pragmatic choices are culturally determined and they rely on rules of politeness that may be or even are different in different countries: it is enough if we think of the usage habits of first name or last name and title in different cultural environments. “Pragmatic meaning also refers to the fact that the competent communicator knows how to use the language appropriately, functionally and strategically, manipulating the language intentionally, so as to obtain real-world advantages or avoid negative consequences.” (Vizental, 2006: 46) An appropriate use of language refers to adapting the message to the social setting of the interaction, to knowing how to encode our social status relative to our partner. This pragmatic knowledge is grammaticalized in the language, as people know the vocabulary, grammar structures and style they have to apply when talking to old people or superiors. The place, time, and activity type, the so-called *situational context* also influences interactions, as we are aware that there is time and place for cracking a joke, being formal, etc.

Language has five basic functions:

- A neutral *informational* function: people use the language to convey information;
- A *directive* function: people use the language to influence other people’s behaviour and attitudes;

- A *phatic* function: people use the language to keep communication lines and social relationships open;
- An *expressive* function: people use the language to express feelings and attitudes;
- An *aesthetic* function: people use the language to produce beauty, to please the era, and to be interesting. (Jakobson, 1980: 81–85)

The most important language functions for pragmatics are the directive and the phatic functions that go hand in hand with social meaning. People use the language phatically and directive to assure an efficient functioning of society. The two most important pragmatic phenomena that carry pragmatic meaning are speech acts and indirectness. Speech acts carry more or different meaning than the semantic load of the words. Thus, we can speak about a lexical level of meaning, a contextual level of meaning, and the force of the utterance. A great deal of the speaker's meaning is conveyed indirectly. Indirectness is an outstanding bearer of pragmatic meaning, and people prefer indirectness for a number of reasons (to be more interesting, more polite, etc). Because of the massive amount of indirectness, some indirect constructs have been conventionalized: for instance, *How do you do*. Translators have to be very careful with such constructs, as they do not intend to inquire about the interlocutor's well-being, but are rather a form of greeting. Another aspect that has to be considered refers to the cultural differences: straightforward indirectness in American English, but Asian cultures recommend more elaborate strategies of indirectness and politeness.

In the 1970s and the early 1980s, Reiss and Vermeer came up with the so-called *skopos* theory of translation, which stressed the interactional, pragmatic aspects of translation, arguing that the shape of target texts (TT) should be determined by the function, or *skopos* that is intended to be fulfilled in the target context. The *skopos* theory is target-text oriented: "rather than presenting the translator with a fixed body of facts which he or she must pass on to the target audience, ST is seen as an information offer, which the translator must interpret by selecting those features which most closely correspond to the requirements of the target situation." (Shuttleworth–Cowie, 2007: 156) According to the *skopos* theory, the translation of a text should be done by primarily taking into consideration the needs and purposes of the target context and audience: thus, a scientific text can become fairly literal, the sayings of Buddha can be translated without the endless repetitive parts, and American business letters can be rendered with extra politeness formulae when the target public is a European one.

In 1992, Mona Baker published a book – *In Other Words* – in which she dealt with the pragmatic aspects of translation as well. In the final chapter of the book, she approaches the issue of pragmatic equivalence in two points, coherence and implicature:

"Coherence is a very problematic and elusive notion because of the diversity of factors, linguistic and non-linguistic, which can affect it and the varying

degrees of importance which a particular factor can assume in a given context. Even a single lexical item, if mistranslated, can affect the way a text coheres. A polysemous item in the source text will rarely have an equivalent with the same range of meanings in the target language. If the source text makes use of two or more meanings of an item and the translation fails, for whatever reason, to convey any of those meanings, whole layers of meaning will be lost, resulting in what Blum-Kulka (1986) refers to as a 'shift incoherence'.

... The fact that many of these factors are language- and culture-specific adds to the complexity of the problem. What most of the examples given in this chapter seem to suggest is that in order to maintain coherence translators often have to minimize discrepancies between the model of the world presented in the source text and that with which the target reader is likely to be familiar. The extent of intervention varies considerably and depends in the final analysis on two main factors. The first is the translator's ability to assess the knowledge and expectations of the target reader – the more the target reader is assumed to know, the less likely that the translator will be inclined to intervene with lengthy explanations. Likewise, the more harmony is assumed to exist between the model of the world presented in the source text and the target culture's version of the world, the more inclined the translator will be to remain invisible, i.e. refrain from direct intervention. The second factor is the translator's own view of his or her role and of the whole question of where his/her loyalties ought to lie – whether they ought to lie with the source text or with the target reader." (Baker, 1992: 253–254)

Rodica Superceanu quotes Jean Delisle, who introduced the concept of *pragmatic texts*: "this kind of text cannot be adequately and appropriately translated unless the translator considers the situation in which the texts were produced and the situation for which they are translated. Since the translation approach has to be pragmatic, i.e. to consider language in practical use and not language for aesthetic purposes, he has called such texts pragmatic." (Superceanu, 2009: 13) Pragmatic texts are texts that belong to professional genres, which convey information in textual forms expected by the audience at which they are aimed. Pragmatic texts in translation studies come from the following domains: business and finance (business correspondence, contracts and agreements, insurance policies, reports, press releases, advertising materials, magazine articles), international organizations (EU, NATO, UNESCO, FAO reports, minutes, laws, statutes, resolutions, articles, brochures, booklets), education, science and technology (specialized articles, books, abstracts), tourism (guidebooks, brochures, leaflets, posters, contracts, regulations), the mass media (articles, interviews, news stories, subtitling or voice-over of films, documentaries, etc.), and legal matters (certificates, ID papers, powers of attorney, letters of recommendation, medical records, transcripts of records).

Pragmatic texts are characterized by:

- Specific communicative purposes: informative, persuasive or phatic;
- Specific content, generally focusing on objective facts or attitudes;
- A specific textual structure and information organization that follow specific norms and conventions that are determined by the nature of the message/reader's expectations;
- Specific lexical units, i.e. specific terminologies, set expressions, syntactic structures (impersonal constructions);
- Specific stylistic features: clarity, precision, conciseness, simplicity.

“Pragmatic texts are utilitarian, i.e. serve practical and immediate communicative purposes. Their content is made up of aspects of objective reality and takes a textual form specific to the communicative conventions of a professional community. Translating such texts requires from the translator several kinds of knowledge: of the subject matter, of the communicative situation for which they are used, of the conventions of communication, and of the stylistic devices which best realize the communicators' purposes.” (Superceanu, 2009: 15)

The pragmatic approach to language and communication considers the meaning of words and utterances as context-dependent, with reference to the possible networks of actions and the potential effects these actions may generate. Meaning is denotation but also connotation, and meaning, in a pragmatic viewpoint, sometimes exceeds the limitations of reference, so it does not simply describe the world. Lack of reference does not mean lack of meaning (no one has ever met Batman, yet all the stories about him make sense). Part of the meaning is its intended social function. “To understand language involves understanding the culture as well as the social practices of the community of speakers in question. Meaning emerges, is clearly conveyed and disambiguated only in specific contexts of situation, which need to be defined as the site where social, cultural and psychological elements of communal life become inextricably interwoven.” (Sorea, 2007: 26)

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REZUMAT

Introducere în studiul pragmaticii

Volumul intitulat *Introducere în studierea pragmaticii* își propune să familiarizeze studenții de la specializarea traductologie cu rolul și locul pragmaticii în lingvistica contemporană, totodată cu rolul și funcția pragmaticii în limba engleză. Am urmărit să includem în volumul nostru cele mai importante teme din domeniul pragmaticii – teoria actelor de vorbire; structura actelor de vorbire și modelul actelor de vorbire la Austin și Searle, tipologia și realizările lingvistice ale actelor ilocuționare, presupuziția, deixisul, implicația conversațională și teoria implicației a lui Grice, dimensiunea socială a actelor de vorbire, teoria politeții și relația dintre politețe și actele de vorbire indirecte, rolul contextului în configurarea sensurilor pragmatice. Am inclus și un capitol dedicat importanței studierii acestor noțiuni de pragmatică din perspectiva unui (viitor) traducător. Volumul nostru face o prezentare a conceptelor folosite în descrierea dimensiunii sociale a limbajului; de asemenea oferă o prezentare clară, succintă a tuturor problemelor care în mod tradițional implică pragmatica, dar în același timp se ocupă și de noile direcții de cercetare în domeniul pragmaticii. Obiectivul nostru în elaborarea și conceperea acestui manual a fost să conștientizăm studenții în legătură cu aspecte precum: folosirea limbii în relație cu multiplele fațete ale experienței umane, în contexte lingvistice și non-lingvistice care stabilesc rolul/locul participanților în actul de vorbire/discurs, dorind, în ultimă instanță, să-i facem să înțeleagă relația dintre cunoștințe și experiență.

KIVONAT

Bevezetés a pragmatikába

A *Bevezetés a pragmatikába* című jegyzetünk megírásának célja az volt, hogy rávilágítsunk a pragmatika helyére és szerepére a nyelvészet tágabb kérdéskörében. A fordító szakos diákjaink számára szeretnénk érthetővé és elérhetővé tenni olyan kérdéseket és fogalmakat, mint a beszédaktus-elmélet, a beszédaktusok szerkezete és tipológiája Austin és Searle olvasatában, az illokúciók különböző vetületei, előfeltételezések, deiktikus nyelvi elemek, implikatúrák és Grice implikatúraelmélete, a beszédaktusok társadalmi beágyazódása és dimenziói, az udvariasság elmélete, valamint az udvarias közlésmód és indirekt beszédaktusok viszonya, és nem utolsósorban a kontextus meghatározó szerepe a nyelvi árnyalatok és értelmek kifejezésében. Könyvünkben külön fejezetben tárgyaljuk a pragmatika szerepét a fordítástudományban. A legfontosabb pragmatikai fogalmakon kívül a tudományág legújabb vetületeit is szeretnénk diákjaink elé tárni. Célunk az, hogy megértessük hallgatóinkkal a nyelvhasználat és az emberi lét más vetületei közt létező nagyon árnyalt kapcsolatrendszer, hogy rávilágítsunk arra, hogy a (nyelvi és társadalmi) kontextus milyen módon alkotja és csiszolja az értelmeket, valamint hogyan határozza meg a kommunikációs aktusban résztvevők szerepeinek az alakulását. Nem utolsósorban, könyvünk megírása által azt szeretnénk elérni, hogy a pragmatikát tanuló hallgatóink megértsék és tudatosítsák azt az összetett kapcsolatrendszer, amely a (nyelv)tudás és a tapasztalat, azaz a nyelv használata között létezik.

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