Lecture 16

LCD 306: Semantics & Pragmatics

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Tuesday 14 April 2015

Outline

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Exam II

- 40 questions downsampled from 89 questions
- Every person had a unique test
- Grade available on Blackboard
- Worth 19% of final grade

Exam II

- Average score: 33.04/40, 82.6%
- Standard deviation: 5.32
- Min, Max: 20, 43
- No extra credit or revisions for exam

Exam II

- Review questions from exam at home
- To discuss, make appointment for office hours or email
- Pay attention to points received not what was marked wrong

Group Project No. 1

Grade will be distributed on Thursday.

Group Project No. 2

An experiment on one of the topics raised in class

- Truth Values
- Quantification
- Entailments
- Synonymy/Antonymy

Outstanding Assessment

- Exam III (19%)
- Final Project (14.5%)
- Homework from unit 3 (2.5%–4.5%)

Extra Credit

- Participate in Study
- Attend Semantics Lecture at the Graduate Center

Calendar

- 14 & 15 April
    - Presuppositions
- 21 & 23 April
    - Implicatures
- 28 & 30 April
    - Speech Acts

Calendar

- 5 & 7 May
  - Conversation Structure
- 12 & 14 May
  - Politeness
- Finals Week
  - Presentations & Final

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Pragmatics

- Moving on for the last half of class to Pragmatics
- What is pragmatics and how does it differ from semantics?

Meaning

- Semantics interprets the meaning of language forms **without** context
- Pragmatics examines how language forms are used for different functions **in different contexts**

Pragmatics

- The study of speaker meaning
- Pragmatics studies the effect of context on meaning in conversation.

Pragmatics

- Pragmatics studies the effect of context on meaning in conversation.
- These are the "secret rules" of the language

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Meaning Varying as a Function of Context

- What is an example of a linguistic object (word, phrase, or sentence) that is used to mean different things in different contexts?

Context

What can this utterance mean?

"Bertha just got an apple."

- She's always been a PC user.
- She's had a big breakfast so that's her whole lunch.
- She is vegetarian and that is all she can eat.

Context

What can this utterance mean?
"Bertha just got an apple."

- She is spent all her money on buying an apple computer.
- She didn't bring enough to eat.

Context

- Given all of this ambiguity, how do we resolve this?
- Context
  - Based on the words themselves
  - Based on knowledge of the world

Context

Context based on the words themselves

- the words and sentences that have preceded the utterance in discourse. The specific linguistic objects

Context

Context based on **the words themselves**

- Example of linguistic context:
  - *My neighbor Tamara has a huge rack of spices for cooking.*

Context

Context based on knowledge of the world

- the real world surroundings at the time of utterance
- location, audience, events in the world

Context

Context based on **knowledge of the world**

- Example of situational context
    - "Look over here"

Context

Context based on **society**

- the social relationships among the people in the conversation
- social conventions of society

Context

Context based on **society**

- Example of social context
    - "Would you please take out a piece of paper?"

Context

- Linguistic
- Situational
- Social

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Entailment

- We have previously talked about entailment in terms of truth conditions
- What is formula definition of entailment?

Truth

- Analytic: Linguistic
- Synthetic: Situational

Entailment

- Can be based on Analytic or Synthetic truth

Entailment

Truth Value

- If the first statement is true, the second statement is true

Entailment

Truth Value

1. *Golnesa likes the writers or the actors* entails *Golnesa likes the writers*.

Entailment

Is the following true?

1. *Reza saw two cats in the box* entails *There were two cats in the box*.

Entailment

Sets

- The first statement is a superset of the second statement

Entailment

Sets

1. *To cook an egg* entails *Having boiled it*.
2. $\exists x(E(x) \wedge (C(x) \rightarrow B(x)))$
3. x is in the set of eggs and cooking things is a subset of boiled things

Entailment

Taxonomic Trees

- The second statement node is dominated by the first statement node

Entailment

Taxonomic Trees

1. *Every student has finished the homework* entails *Every Mexican student has finished the homework*.

Foregrounding

- We can emphasize one of a sentence's entailment
- Use clefting, stress, etc

Foregrounding Template

X Y'ed Z

- X: someone Y'ed Z
- Y: X did something to Z
- Z: X Y'ed something

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Truth Values

Can you assign truth values to the following?

- Cristián sang.

- Did the mullah sing well?

- Go to bed!

Truth Value

- We can only assign truth values to declarative utterances.
- We cannot assign truth values to imperatives or interrogatives

Inferences

- While we don't know the truth of an utterance, the speaker is still communicating meaning

Assertion

- A speaker can assert something directly or indirectly
- An indirect assertion is dependent upon conventional interpretation

Presupposition

Presupposition, unlike entailment, survives under...

- Negation
- Subordination (under modals, antecedent of if clause)
- Questioning
- Factive Verbs

Presupposition Triggers

- Some words trigger (imply) a presupposition
- Conventional Implicature

Presupposition Triggers

- Definiteness of a noun presupposes the nouns existence
- Possessives, Proper Names
- Existential Presupposition

Presupposition Triggers

- Possessives $>>$ Possession
- Regret
- Like $>>$ Know
- Answer
- Only, again, manage, third, continue, win, another, lie