

Pragmatics: Introduction and definitions

Pragmatics: the study of meaning as **communicated by a speaker** and **interpreted by a listener**

→ analysis of what *people* mean
 → requires study of circumstances = study of contextual meaning
 contextual meaning: how more is communicated than what is said

- differentiation of what is said/unsaid involves **distance**
- closeness implies shared experience

→ pragmatics: *the study of the expression of relative distance* (Yule 2002)

Pragmatics investigates the relationship between linguistic forms and their uses (purpose, goal, intention)

- use of language for interaction = the interpersonal function
 - **interaction** usually has a communicative intention
- cf. small talk; phatic function of language

Speech acts 1

People perform actions with utterances

You are welcome!

Common label: apology, complaint, compliment, invitation, promise, request

- supported by circumstances of utterance = speech event
- cf. cold day, speaker sips tea – "That tea is cold" – complaint
 hot day, speaker sips (ice-) tea – "That tea is cold" – compliment

→ no 1:1 correspondence of utterance/action, circumstances are important

Austin 1952: recognized that speakers "perform" when using performatives

- but: speakers always "perform" → speech act theory
- utterance consists of 3 related acts

Speech acts 2

1. locutionary act: basic act of utterance, of producing a meaningful linguistic expression

- usually well-formed utterances have a purpose

2. illocutionary act: utterance is produced with some function in mind

- utterance has communicative force
- I've just made some cookies*

Can be: statement/offer/explanation, = its **illocutionary force**

3. perlocutionary act: utterance should have an effect

I've just made some cookies

function/illocution	effect/perlocution
statement	listener can appreciate the smell
offer	listener invited to eat some
explanation	let listener know why speaker was not there

- usually analyzed: illocution; tells what utterance "counts as"

Speech acts 3

illocutionary force

a.)	I'll see you later	
b.)	I predict that a.)	prediction
c.)	I promise you that a.)	promise
d.)	I warn you that a.)	threat

How can a speaker assume which illocutionary force is recognized?

→ illocutionary force indicating device (IFID)

- performative verbs (predict, promise, warn)
- sometimes less explicit, sometimes its stress, sometimes low voice for warnings etc.

Felicity conditions

Conditions/circumstances that accompany the performance of a speech act

- ensure it is recognized as intended, e.g. courtroom situation, judge says "I sentence you...:"

Speech acts 4

General felicity conditions

participants understand language, don't "act" like actors or lie permanently

- a.) content condition: cf. promise, warning must be about future
 - b.) reparatory condition: e.g. promise, this means the event will not happen by itself
 - c.) sincerity condition: promise → speaker really intends to carry it out
- Essential condition: promise changes state of speaker from obligation to non-obligation

Performative hypothesis

- underlying every utterance is a clause containing a performative that makes illocution explicit

"I <hereby> V_{perf} you that <utterance> "

- a.) Clean up this mess → I order you that you clean up this mess
- b.) The work is done → I inform you that the work is done

implicit performatives explicit performatives