

The interpretation of utterances

Linguistic meaning: underdetermines utterance interpretation
→ Harnish 1976: make the strongest relevant claim justifiable by your evidence
• systematically used in quantifiers, cf. *some of the apples are ripe*
→ not all are ripe

Grice: nonentailment relations

- a.) *She is poor but honest* → contrast between poverty and honesty
b.) *John has good handwriting*
(context: recommendation letter for philosophy)
→ he is not that good at philosophy
c.) *My cat is in the kitchen or in the basement*
→ I don't know for fact that she is in the kitchen
instances of implicature: pragmatic presupposition induces:
• focus particles like *even, too, gerade, noch*
• truth-conditionally transparent verbs like *manage to, bother to...*

Implicature and the cooperative principle

Implicature: nonlogical inference conveyed by speakers in uttering U in context C without being part of what is said in U
Grice: what is expressed is richer than what is said
→ concept of an "expected" amount of information in discourse
→ cooperative principle of conversation (Grice 1975) and
4 sub-principles/maxims held together by the
cooperative principle: make conversational contribution as required by accepted purpose/direction

Grice maxims:

- 1.) quantity: make contribution as informative as is requested
• do not make it more informative
- 2.) quality: try to make a contribution that is true
• don't say what you believe to be false
• don't say for what you don't have adequate evidence
- 3.) relation: be relevant
- 4.) manner: avoid obscurity, ambiguity
• be brief and orderly

Inference, presupposition, and entailment

inference: cognitive process to complement the semantic model in discourse by its presuppositions and entailments
presupposition: something the speaker assumes to be the case
entailment: what logically follows from what is asserted in utterance

- listeners use inferences
- speakers have presuppositions
- sentences have entailments

- a.) *Some of Sue's in-laws are honest*
• inference via cooperative principle: *Some are dishonest*
b.) *Mary's mother bought a car*
• presupposition: Mary exists, has a mother, has only one mother, mother has money (all depends on speaker's beliefs)
• entailments: mother bought something, bought 1 commodity, somebody bought a car, somebody did something...
(all independent from speaker's beliefs)

Types of presupposition 1

1. **existential presupposition:** possessives like *Mary's car* = presupposition of existence *Mary's car* >> Mary has a car
 2. **factive presupposition:** information following V like *know, realize*
• considered as fact (*I know John is nice*)
a.) *She didn't realize John was ill* >> John was ill
b.) *I regretted telling him* >> I told him
c.) *I'm glad it's over* >> it's over
 3. **lexical presupposition:** presupposition, that another, non-asserted meaning is understood
a.) *Sarah managed to ...* >> she succeeded
b.) *Sarah didn't manage to ...* >> she failed
but a.) + b.) >> she tried to
others: *She stopped smoking* >> she used to smoke
She started smoking >> she didn't smoke before
- factive presupposition: presupposes truth of what is stated
 - lexical presupposition: presupposes an unstated concept

Types of presupposition 2

4. **structural presupposition:** presupposes that part of structure is already assumed to be true
a.) *When did he leave?* >> he left
b.) *Where did you buy the cake?* >> you bought cake
• information is necessarily true
• subtle manipulation what listener is supposed to believe:
How fast was the car when it ran the red light? >> it ran the red light
5. **non-factive presuppositions:**
a.) *I dreamed I was rich* >> I was not rich
b.) *He pretends to be ill* >> he is not ill
6. **counterfactual presupposition:** what is presupposed is not only not true but contra to what is true
non-factive: *He pretends to be ill* >> he is not ill, but not: he is healthy
counterfactual: *If you were my friend...* >> you are not my friend