

# Introduction to Pragmatics

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# Aim and Objectives

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- ✿ Aim: The student will learn the basics of pragmatics
- ✿ Objective 1: they will be able to account for the systematic boundaries of pragmatics
- ✿ Objective 2: they will be able to explain the differences between pragmatics and semantics
- ✿ Objective 3: they will be able to analyze the pragmatic phenomena in basic discourses
- ✿ Objective 4: they will be able to analyze presuppositions and entailments

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“The main function of language is not to express thought, . . . but rather to play an active pragmatic part in human nature.”

– *Bronislaw Malinowski (1935)*

# Definition

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- ❖ Pragmatics is commonly viewed as
- ❖ the study of language in use (Crystal, 1997; Mey, 2001),
- ❖ topicalizing the incorporation of context factors in discourse (Levinson, 1983).

- ❖ Such context factors can include, for example, the **physical setting** in which the discourse takes place, the **relationship between the participants** in terms of relationship factors (relative power, degree of imposition, social distance), and the **participants' shared knowledge** about the topic of the discourse and social rules and norms.
- ❖ Pragmatics therefore contributes a **social and contextual dimension** to the study of language, extending analyses beyond deliberations on linguistic form, and **concerns itself with situated language function**.

- ❖ Pragmatics as a field incorporates the study of a range of research areas such as:
- ❖ requests, apologies, and refusals, the structuring of spoken and written discourse, implicature, routine formulae, deixis...
- ❖ With regard to language users' pragmatic knowledge, Leech (1983) distinguishes between **knowledge of sociopragmatics** and **pragmalinguistics**.

- ❖ Sociopragmatic knowledge encompasses knowledge of the social rules of language use, including knowledge of appropriateness, the meaning of situational and interlocutor factors, and social conventions and taboos.
- ❖ Pragmalinguistic knowledge incorporates the linguistic tools necessary for implementing speech intentions, and relies crucially on general target language knowledge.
- ❖ It is essential that both aspects of pragmatic knowledge are developed and accurately mapped onto one another.

- ❖ If a language user has the sociopragmatic knowledge to understand that a polite request is necessary in a given situation but lacks the pragmalinguistic knowledge of modals, interrogatives, and conventionalized formulae to utter it, pragmatic failure will likely result.
- ❖ Conversely, if a language user has control of pragmalinguistic tools without awareness of sociopragmatic rules of usage, she or he might produce well-formed sentences which are so non-conventional that they are incomprehensible or have disastrous consequences at the relationship level.

- ✿ Pragmatic competence is represented in all major models of communicative competence. In Canale and Swain's (1980) original model, **“sociocultural rules of use”** and **“discourse rules”** are part of sociolinguistic competence.
- ✿ The former are mostly concerned with **appropriateness**, whereas the latter refer to **coherence and cohesion** in discourse.

- ❖ Pragmatic competence is not wholly confined to the language dimension of Bachman's model (Lyle F. Bachman 1990), as one part of the assessment component in his strategic competence category is the evaluation of the interlocutor, the speaker-hearer's relationship to the interlocutor, and the situation.
- ❖ These strategic abilities draw on sociopragmatic competence, and also on pragmalinguistic competence to the extent that a hearer's evaluation of the interlocutor is influenced by the interlocutor's stance toward the hearer, which is encoded linguistically.

Phoneme

Morpheme

Word

Phrase

Clause

Meaning

Discourse

Pragmatics

Sentence

# Some key relevant questions here...

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- ❖ What are speakers doing in verbal interactions?
- ❖ How is reference achieved in utterance and interactions?
- ❖ How is context referred to and built into verbal communication?
- ❖ What is the role of background knowledge in utterance understanding?

- ✿ How is linguistic information dispatched in utterance structure?
- ✿ To what extent is pragmatics concerned with truth and truth-conditional aspects of meaning?
- ✿ How is meaning achieved through utterances?
- ✿ etc.

# History

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- ✿ The history of pragmatics can be described as a conjunction of different moves, coming from
- ✿ Epistemology and semiotics (Charles Morris 1938),
- ✿ Philosophy of language (John Austin 1962; John Searle 1969),
- ✿ Logic (Frege [1892]1952; Russell 1905), and

- ❖ Linguistics (Horn 1972; Wilson 1975; Kempson 1975; Gazdar 1979).
- ❖ Basic pragmatics was initially linked to reference and presupposition (Frege and Russell), semantic and pragmatic presuppositions (Wilson and Kempson; Stalnaker 1977), and illocutionary acts (Austin and Searle),
- ❖ It was however in the mid-70s that the main pragmatics topic, implicatures, was introduced in Herbert Paul Grice's seminal and programmatic article *Logic and Conversation*.

- ❖ The first issue of a journal devoted to pragmatics was the third issue of Peter Cole's and Jerry Morgan's *Syntax and Semantics* (1975), which is renowned for the fact that certain of Grice's fundamental articles, as well as John Searle's *Indirect Speech Acts*, were published there.
- ❖ Three and six years later, Peter Cole edited two collections and the eighth issue of *Syntax and Semantics (Pragmatics)* and *Radical Pragmatics*.
- ❖ Both publications contained articles by Grice, respectively *Further Note on Logic and Conversation* and *Presupposition and Conversational Implicature*.

- ❖ These three books explicitly show how the domain of pragmatics changed very quickly, moving from classic philosophical issues such as speech acts to more linguistic concerns including *presupposition*, *information structure*, *discourse*, and *irony*.

- ❖ During the 1980s the first textbook on pragmatics (Levinson's *Pragmatics* in 1983) gave substantial coverage to *conversational implicature* in a chapter that appeared between exposés on two other classic topics, *deixis*, and *presupposition*

- ✿ In 1986, one of the main contributions to pragmatics, Sperber's and Wilson's *Relevance*, provided an extensive discussion of Grice's approach to *non-natural meaning* and *implicature* and defined implicature as a way in which relevance and successful communication can be achieved.

# Importance of studying pragmatics

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- ❖ There's one piece of cake left.
- ❖ What does it mean?
- ❖ a (pragma)linguistic meaning: not two or three...  
ONE
- ❖ a (socio)pragmatic meaning: you cannot have it;  
they ate them all, I hate you guys, the cake was  
good then...

- ✿ the fundamental question in pragmatics: *What is meant by that?*
- ✿ *The literal meaning is the domain of semantics; the "additional meaning" is the domain of pragmatics.*
- ✿ Example: *My day has been a nightmare!*

- ❖ Remember: our knowledge of pragmatics, like all of our linguistic knowledge, is **rule-governed**.
- ❖ There are principles we follow in producing and interpreting language in light of the context, our intentions, and our beliefs about our interlocutors and their intentions.
- ❖ Because speakers within a language community share these **pragmatic principles** concerning language production and interpretation in context, they constitute part of our linguistic competence, not merely matters of performance.
- ❖ That is to say, pragmatic knowledge is part of our knowledge of how to use language appropriately.

- ❖ And as with other areas of linguistic competence, our pragmatic competence is generally **implicit** – known at some level, but not usually available for explicit examination.
- ❖ For example, it would be difficult for most people to explain how they know that *My day was a nightmare* means that my day (like a nightmare) was very unpleasant, and not, for example, that I slept through it.
- ❖ or *This woman is a snake* does not mean she is this crawling animal...
- ❖ The study of pragmatics looks at such interpretive regularities and tries to make explicit the implicit knowledge that guides us in selecting interpretations.

- ✿ Pragmatics, then, has to do with a rather slippery type of meaning, one that isn't found in dictionaries and which may vary from context to context.
- ✿ The same utterance will mean different things in different contexts, and will even mean different things to different people.

- ❖ In general terms, pragmatics typically has to do with meaning that is:
  - ❖ non-literal,
  - ❖ context-dependent,
  - ❖ inferential, and / or
  - ❖ not truth-conditional.
- ❖ A prototypical case of pragmatic meaning is indeed **non-literal, context-dependent, inferential, and not truth-conditional.**

# Truth conditional

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- ❖ When I say *There's one piece of cake left*, the truth of that statement has everything to do with how many pieces of pizza are left, and nothing to do with whether I intend the statement as an offer or a scolding.
- ❖ Thus, the conditions under which the statement is true don't depend on its pragmatic meaning;
- ❖ That's what we mean when we say that the pragmatic meaning is generally not truth-conditional.

- ❖ The truth conditions of a sentence are the conditions under which it would be true,
- ❖ and truth-conditional meaning is any piece of meaning that affects the conditions under which a sentence would be true.
- ❖ example: John is a real genius
- ❖ Truth-conditionally, this means that John is extraordinarily intelligent; thus, the sentence is true only under the condition that John is in fact extraordinarily intelligent.
- ❖ If John is actually not at all smart, the sentence is false.

# Pragmatics vs. DA

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- ❖ Pragmatics is closely related to the field of discourse analysis.
- ❖ Whereas morphology restricts its purview to the individual word, and syntax focuses on individual sentences, discourse analysis studies **strings of sentences produced in a connected discourse.**

- ❖ Because pragmatics concentrates on the use of language in context, and the surrounding discourse is part of the context, the concerns of the two fields overlap significantly.
- ❖ Broadly speaking, however, the two differ in focus:
- ❖ Pragmatics uses discourse as data and seeks to draw generalizations that have predictive power concerning our linguistic competence

- ❖ whereas discourse analysis focuses on the individual discourse, using the findings of pragmatic theory to shed light on how a particular set of interlocutors use and interpret language in a specific context.
- ❖ discourse analysis may be thought of as asking the question "What's happening *in this* discourse?,"
- ❖ whereas pragmatics asks the question "What happens *in* discourse?"
- ❖ Pragmatics draws on natural language data to develop generalizations concerning linguistic behavior, whereas discourse analysis draws on these generalizations in order to more closely investigate natural language data.

# Methodology

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- ❖ In order to determine what it is that speakers do, linguists have traditionally used one of three basic methods to study language use and variation:

- ❖ 1. Native-speaker intuitions

- ❖ a. Your own (introspection)
  - ❖ b. Someone else's (informants)

- ❖ 2. Psycholinguistic experimentation

- ❖ Eye tracking
  - ❖ Verbal protocols, etc.

- ❖ 3. Naturally occurring data

- ❖ a. Elicitation
  - ❖ b. Natural observation
  - ❖ c. Corpus data

# Natural data

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- ❖ The use of **naturally occurring data** gets around these difficulties by observing language in actual use under natural conditions.
- ❖ **Elicitation** (in which the researcher creates a context that's conducive to getting the subject to utter the desired form)
- ❖ **Natural observation** is like elicitation, except that rather than setting up a context to compel your subject to utter the desired form, you simply wait in some natural setting and watch, hoping that they will do so – and that they will do so with sufficient frequency to give you enough data to be useful.
- ❖ However, depending on the frequency of the desired form, one could wait quite a long time before collecting enough data to do a proper study.

# Intuition

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- ❖ The researcher's own **intuition**, is valuable during the initial stage of research, during the process of forming a hypothesis.
- ❖ It helps to guide the researcher toward a reasonable hypothesis and away from hypotheses that are clearly untenable. But once you have a hypothesis, your intuition becomes unreliable, since it may be biased toward confirming your own hypothesis.
- ❖ A better option is to use the intuitions of a group of informants via questionnaires or interviews, but here too you must be careful: Subjects may (consciously or not) try to please or impress you by reporting their speech as more prescriptively "correct" than it actually is.
- ❖ This is the "observer's paradox" ([Labov 1972](#)): The presence of the observer affects the behavior of those being observed. Moreover, people often don't have accurate knowledge of how they speak when they're not paying attention.

# Psycholinguistic experiments

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- ❖ **Psycholinguistic experimentation** is able to eliminate some of these difficulties by testing people's actual linguistic knowledge and behavior outside of their ability to manipulate this behavior.
- ❖ For example, a lexical decision task might ask subjects to read a text and then present them with either a common word of the language or a nonsense word; their task is to determine whether the word shown is real or not. Words made salient or cognitively "accessible" by the prior text are more quickly identified as real words than are unrelated words.
- ❖ Similarly, eye-tracking apparatus can determine precisely where someone is looking at a given instant (to determine, for example, what the individual takes to be the referent of a particular pronoun in a presented text, or what part of a sentence takes the longest to understand).
- ❖ But again, very careful set-up and control of the experiment are required in order to eliminate the observer's paradox. Typically, care is taken to ensure that the subject is unaware of what is actually being tested.

# Use of corpus

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- ❖ The use of **corpus data** circumvents many of the above problems, in that it involves a pre-existing collection of raw language data, typically consisting of millions of words, which have been naturally produced and which can be scoured for instances of the forms under investigation.
- ❖ In the past, such corpora have been extremely difficult to compile, but with the computer age has come the ability to store a virtually unlimited amount of text in an easy-to-search format.
- ❖ The use of corpora avoids the observer's paradox, as well as sparing the researcher the trouble of waiting for a form to be produced or trying to elicit it.
- ❖ The use of corpus data does, however, have its own drawbacks. For example, you must take care in selecting your data sample. If your data are skewed, so will your results be

# Pragmatics and semantics

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	<b>male</b>	<b>adult</b>	<b>human</b>	<b>equine</b>	<b>bovine</b>	<b>canine</b>	<b>porcine</b>
<b>boy</b>	+	-	+	-	-	-	-
<b>man</b>	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
<b>woman</b>	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
<b>girl</b>	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
<b>mare</b>	-	+	-	+	-	-	-
<b>cow</b>	-	+	-	-	+	-	-
<b>bitch</b>	-	+	-	-	-	+	-
<b>sow</b>	-	+	-	-	-	-	+

# Meaning in Pragmatics

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- ✿ Consider the following sentences:
  - ✿ a. That clap of thunder means rain is coming.
  - ✿ b. Supercilious means "arrogant and disdainful."

- ❖ In the first case, the meaning in question is what Grice (1957) calls **natural meaning** – an indication that is independent of anybody's intent. A clap of thunder indicates that rain is coming independently of whether anybody intends for that indication to be present, either on this particular occasion or in general
- ❖ In the case of (b), on the other hand, there clearly is an intent that the word *supercilious* be taken to mean "arrogant and disdainful." Someone who uses this word intends that the word / meaning correlation be recognized by their interlocutor.
- ❖ This meaning is **nonnatural**, in Grice's terms; there is no automatic, natural correlation between the word and its meaning. Instead, the word / meaning correlation is arbitrary

- ✿ “A meant something by  $x$ ” is (roughly) equivalent to “A intended the utterance of  $x$  to produce some effect in an audience by means of the recognition of his intention” ” (Grice 1989: 220).
- ✿ Non-natural meaning, or meaning conveyed in verbal communication, therefore supposes
- ✿ (i) the recognition of the informative intention of the agent (the communicator or the speaker) and
- ✿ (ii) the recognition of his or her communicative intention.
- ✿ the connection of an utterance  $x$  to its meaning  $p$  is through *inference*.

# Sense vs reference

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- ❖ Sense: the sort of meaning that a dictionary would give for the word.
- ❖ Referent: a matter of what particular entity is being picked out, or referred to
- ❖ Philosopher Gottlob Frege developed the distinction between sense and reference (in German, *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*)
- ❖ he uses the example of the phrases *the morning star* and *the evening star*, which have the same referent – the planet Venus – but obviously different senses, since *morning* and *evening* have different senses.

- ❖ Unlike sense, it's possible for reference to vary in different contexts: On one occasion, a judge may use the phrase *the defendant* to refer to John Doe; on another, to refer to Jane Snow, depending on the trial in question

# Sentence meaning vs speaker meaning

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- ❖ Sentence meaning is the literal meaning of a sentence, derivable from the sense of its words and the syntax that combines them. Sentence meaning is "sense" as applied to entire clauses rather than individual words and phrases.
- ❖ Speaker meaning, on the other hand, is the meaning that a speaker intends, which usually includes the literal meaning of the sentence but may extend well beyond it.

- ❖ The meaning of a sentence is context-independent, whereas the meaning of an utterance is context-dependent and depends in particular on the intentions of the speaker.
- ❖ Speaker meaning, therefore, is a pragmatic notion, while sentence meaning is semantic

# Example

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- ❖ I'm cold.
- ❖ The sentence meaning here is straightforward: The speaker is cold.
- ❖ The speaker's meaning in using this utterance in a given context, however, could be any of a number of things, including:
  - ❖ a. Close the window.
  - ❖ b. Bring me a blanket.
  - ❖ c. Turn off the air conditioner.
  - ❖ d. Snuggle up closer.
  - ❖ e. The heater is broken again.
  - ❖ f. Let's go home.
  - ❖ g. Let's go inside.
  - ❖ etc.

# Anaphora and deixis

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- ❖ **Deictic:** interpreted with respect to the context of utterance
- ❖ **Anaphora** is the use of a linguistic expression coreferentially with some other linguistic expression used earlier in the discourse (where **coreferential** means "having the same referent")
- ❖ examples:
  - ❖ (1) My uncle told me that he was a war hero. (he: deixis or anaphora)
  - ❖ (2) I am here now with you. (I, here, now, you: deixis)
  - ❖ (3) My uncle was a war hero. He fought in major battles. (he: anaphora)

# Conventional Implicature

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- ❖ In *Logic and Conversation*, Grice makes a very general distinction between *what is said* by a speaker and *what he means* or *implicates*.
- ❖ “Suppose that A and B are talking about a mutual friend, C, who is now working in a bank. A asks B how C is getting on in his job, and B replies, Oh quite well, I think; he likes his colleagues, and he hasn’t been in prison yet.” (Grice 1975: 43)
- ❖ “I think it is clear that whatever B implied, suggested, meant, etc., in this example, is distinct from what B said, which was simply that C had not been in prison yet” (Grice 1975: 43)

- ✿ “I wish to introduce, as terms of arts, the verb *implicate* and the related nouns *implicature* (cf. implying) and *implicatum* (cf. what is implied)” (Grice 1975: 43).
- ✿ What is said: what is uttered
- ✿ One part of non-natural meaning is *what is said*, which can be reduced to the truth-conditional aspect of meaning, while the other part is *the non-truth-conditional aspect of meaning, known as implicature.*
- ✿ *An implicature is a non-truth-conditional aspect of meaning*

- ✿ “in some cases the conventional meaning of the words used will determine what is implicated, besides helping to determine what is said. If I say (smugly), *He is an Englishman; he is, therefore, brave*, I have certainly committed myself, by virtue of the meaning of my words, to its being the case that his being brave is a consequence of (follows from) his being an Englishman” (Grice 1975: 44).
- ✿ This implies a consequence link between the two sentences.
- ✿ This link, however, does not contribute to the truth conditions of the sentence, since if a sentence  $p$  *therefore*  $q$  is true, it follows that  $p \ \& \ q$  is the case, and that  $p$  is true and that  $q$  is true too.
- ✿ The contribution of *therefore* is thus non-truth-conditional.
- ✿ The meaning contribution of *therefore* is not semantic – semantics being restricted to the domain of truth-conditions – but pragmatic.

- ✿ When a speaker's utterance licenses an inference of some proposition  $p$ , we say that the speaker has **implicated**  $p$ , and the content of  $p$  itself constitutes an **implicature**.
- ✿ Speakers implicate, whereas hearers infer.

# Logical/semantic implication vs. pragmatic implicature

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- ❖ Logical or semantic implication is truth-conditional: If  $p$  implies  $q$ , then anytime  $p$  is true,  $q$  must also be true.
- ❖ This is not the case with implicature: If by uttering  $p$  a speaker implicates  $q$ , it is entirely possible that  $p$  is true but  $q$  is nonetheless false. (conversational implicature)

# Types of implicatures

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- ❖ All of the implicatures in connection with the Cooperative Principle are **conversational implicatures**.
- ❖ One hallmark of a conversational implicature is that its contribution to the meaning of the utterance is not truth-conditional
- ❖ Another is that the implicature is context-dependent

# Generalized Conversational Implicature

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- ✿ a. Most of the mothers were Victorian.
- ✿ b. Not all of the mothers were Victorian.
- ✿ *a* leads to the inference of *b*.
- ✿ Given the linguistic form *most X*, the implicated meaning will include "not all *X*," and this meaning generalizes across instances of *most X*, regardless of what *X* is.
- ✿ The use of the word *most* will implicate *not all*

# Particularized Conversational Implicature

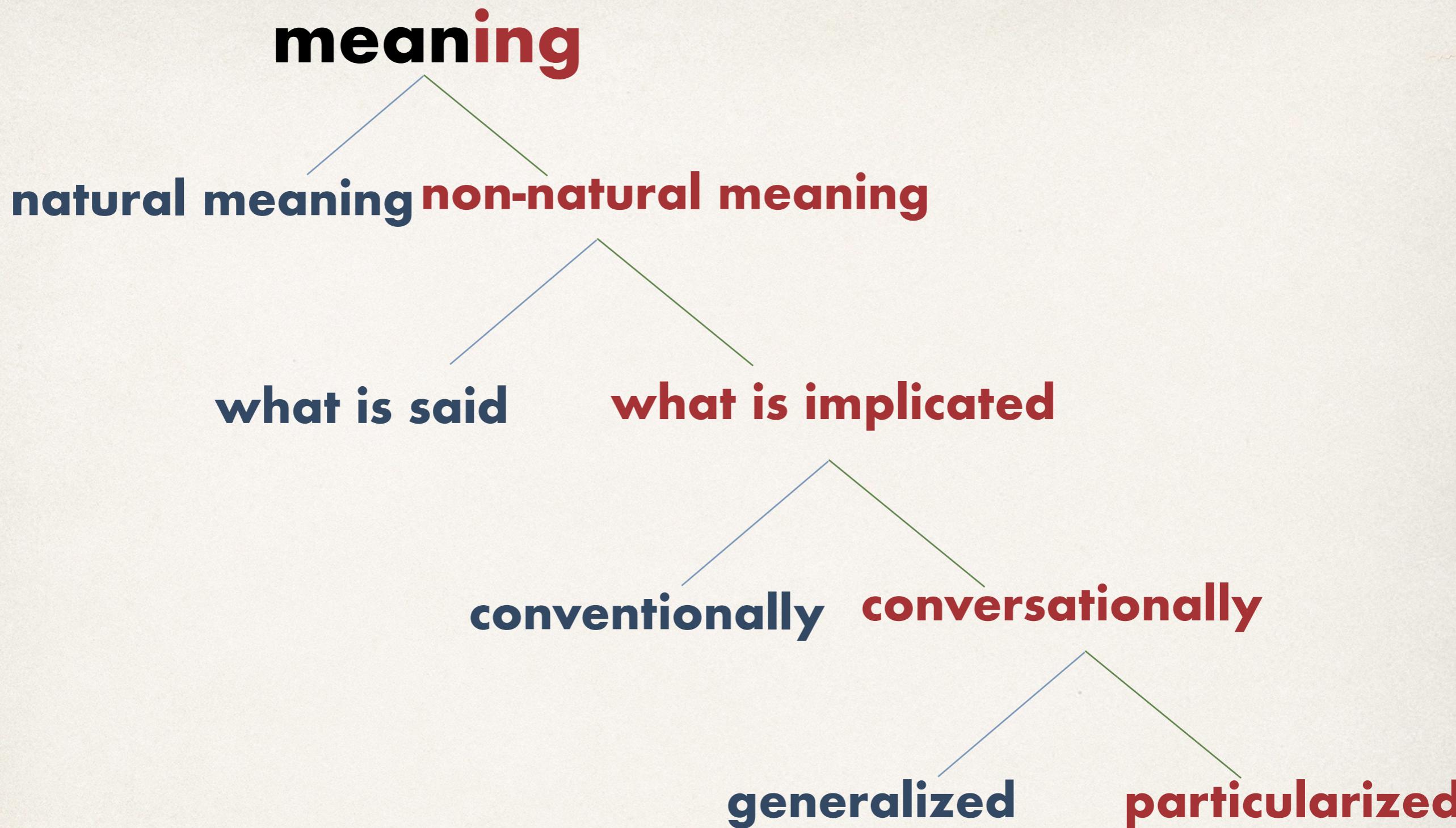
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- ❖ Particularized conversational implicatures are unique to the particular context in which they occur.
- ❖ *Once upon a sunny morning a man who sat in a breakfast nook looked up from his scrambled eggs to see a white unicorn with a gold horn quietly cropping the roses in the garden. The man went up to the bedroom where his wife was still asleep and woke her. "There's a unicorn in the garden," he said. "Eating roses." She opened one unfriendly eye and looked at him. "The unicorn is a mythical beast," she said, and turned her back on him.*
- ❖ In the above utterance, the wife means to convey that the husband did not see a unicorn in the garden

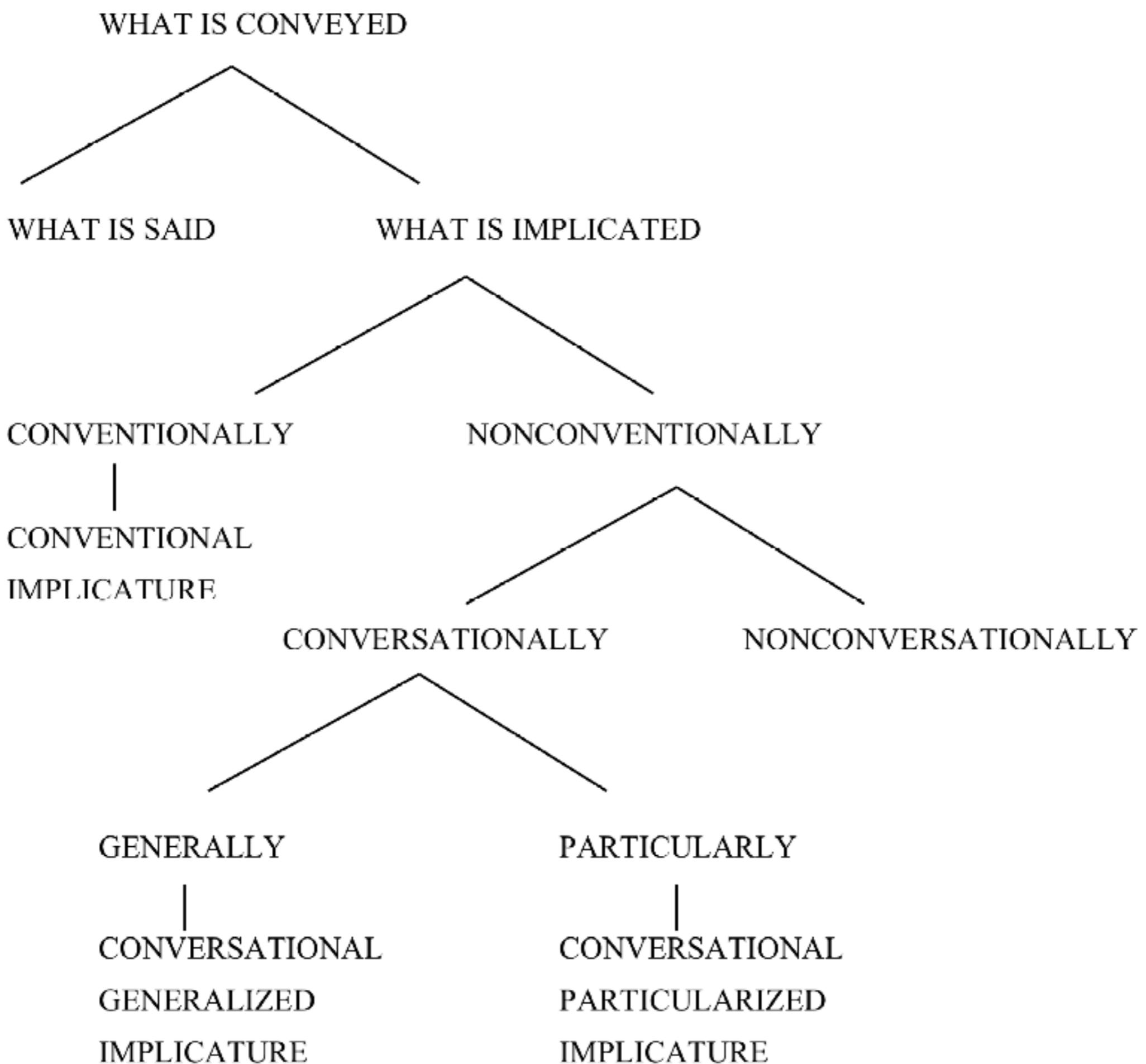
# Conventional implicatures

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- ❖ Conventional implicatures do not require a calculation based on the maxims and the context;
- ❖ Instead, they are consistently attached to a particular linguistic expression, regardless of context.
- ❖ In this sense, they are conventional (i.e., they are conventionally attached to a linguistic form).
- ❖ Nonetheless, they are non-truth- conditional.
- ❖ For this reason, they may be seen as occupying a sort of boundary area between pragmatic meaning (being non-truth-conditional) and semantic meaning (being context-independent).



H. P. Grice's definition of *meaning*



# Exercises

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- ✿ Give the potential implicatures of the following utterances:
  - ✿ a. My dog is black +> "I have a dog" (+> means implicates)

- a. Salimata likes Digbeu
- b. Only Fred likes calamari
- c. Sally fell and skinned her knee
- d. It's raining outside
- e. Gloria is tall; therefore, she is athletic
- f. Jason has few friends
- g. Fido has a fluffy tail
- h. I love most Beatles songs.
- i. Steve will register for biology or chemistry.
- j. Mary's jacket is light red.
- k. I need a drink.
- l. Nadia and Koffi sang l'Abidjanaise.

# Logical connectives

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- ✿  $\neg, \wedge, \vee, \supset, \forall, \exists$  and their linguistic counterparts *not, and, or, if, all, and some.*
- ✿ (see your course of Logic)

# The Cooperative Principle

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- ❖ Grice's *Logic of Conversation* is based on the idea that contributors to a conversation are rational agents; that is, that they obey a general principle of rationality known as the *Cooperative Principle (CP)*
- ❖ The basic idea behind the Cooperative Principle (CP) is that interlocutors, above all else, are attempting to be **cooperative** in conversation.
- ❖ **The Cooperative Principle:** Make your conversational 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. (Grice 1975: 45)
- ❖ In order to fulfill the cooperative principle, the speaker must follow nine maxims of conversation, grouped in four Kantian categories: Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner.

# Gricean Maxims of Conversation

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- ✿ 1. **The Maxim of Quantity:** Say enough, but don't say too much.
  
- ✿ 2. **The Maxim of Quality:** Say only what you have reason to believe is true.
  
- ✿ 3. **The Maxim of Relation:** Say only what is relevant.
  
- ✿ 4. **The Maxim of Manner:** Be brief, clear, and unambiguous.

- ❖ There are four ways in which the speaker can behave with respect to the CP; the speaker can:
- ❖ **observe** the maxims: straightforwardly obey it, that is, to in fact say the right amount, to say only what you have evidence for, to be relevant, or to be brief, clear, and unambiguous (depending on the maxim in question)
- ❖ **violate** a maxim: fail to observe it, but to do so inconspicuously, with the assumption that your hearer won't realize that the maxim is being violated (eg: a lie).
- ❖ **flout** a maxim, or to violate it – but in this case the violation is so intentionally blatant that the hearer is expected to be aware of the violation.
- ❖ **opt out** of the maxims: to refuse to play the game at all. If I'm trying to have an argument with my husband and he responds by opening the newspaper and beginning to read, he has opted out.

# Presupposition

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- ❖ Something the speaker assumes to be the case before making an utterance
- ❖ Speakers, not sentences, have presuppositions
- ❖ Presupposition is a precondition for sentence / statement to be true or false.
- ❖ “The King of Kumasi is wise” presupposes
- ❖ “Kumasi exists”; “Kumasi has a King”...

- ❖ If anything is asserted there is always an obvious presupposition (Frege 1892)
- ❖ If one asserts ‘Kepler died in misery’, there is a presupposition that the name Kepler designates something (‘Kepler designates something’ is not part of the meaning of ‘Kepler died in misery’)
- ❖ (i) referring phrases carry presuppositions to the effect that they do indeed refer (ii) a sentence and its negative counterpart share the same set of presuppositions
- ❖ (iii) in order for assertion to be either true or false, its presuppositions must be true or satisfied
- ❖ NB: Sentences aren’t true or false, only statements are. (see Sir Peter Frederick Strawson 1950)

- ⌘ Presupposition is treated as a relationship between two propositions
- ⌘ Salif's horse is strong (= proposition  $p$ )
- ⌘ Salif has a horse (= proposition  $q$ )
- ⌘  $p \gg q$  ( $p$  presupposes  $q$ )
- ⌘ The presupposed relation remains constant under negation
- ⌘ Salif's horse isn't strong (= NOT  $p$ )
- ⌘ Salif has a horse (=  $q$ )
- ⌘ NOT  $p \gg q$  (NOT  $p$  presupposes  $q$ )

- ❖ Constancy under negation = the presupposition of statement remains constant (i.e., true) even when that statement is negated
- ❖ Everybody knows that John is gay (= p)
- ❖ Everybody doesn't know that John is gay (= NOT p)
- ❖ John is gay (= q)
- ❖  $p \gg q \ \& \ \text{NOT } p \gg q$
- ❖ Speakers disagree about validity of p, but not of q

# Entailment

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- ❖ Something that logically follows from what is asserted in the utterance
- ❖ Sentences, not speakers, have entailments
- ❖ Entailment is "a relation that holds between P and Q where P and Q are variables standing for propositions such that if the truth of Q necessarily follows from the truth of P (and the falsity of Q necessarily follows from the falsity of P), then P entails Q". (John Lyons 1977:85)

- ❖ Sentence S entails sentence S' if and only if whenever S is true, S' is true too.
- ❖ or, *Sentence S entails sentence S' if and only if S' is true in all possible worlds in which S is true.*
- ❖ “John is a bachelor” entails three other sentences as follows:
  - ❖ a. John is unmarried.
  - ❖ b. John is male.
  - ❖ c. John is adult.

# Presupposition vs entailment

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- ❖ A entails B if it is the case that whenever A is true, B is true.
- ❖ If there is any situation where A can be true, and B might not be true, then A does NOT entail B. If there is no such situation, then A entails B.
- ❖ Examples:
  - ❖ a. Every student has finished the homework. b. Every Ivorian student has finished the homework.
  - ❖ a. John saw two cats in the box. b. There were two cats in the box.

- ❖ a. Everyone who got at least three A's must skip the next assignment. b. Everyone who got at least five A's must skip the next assignment.
- ❖ **A presupposes B if it is the case that B must be taken for granted or assumed in order to interpret A.**
- ❖ Presupposition survives under negation, in questions, and in conditionals.
- ❖ A presupposes B if it is inappropriate (odd, anomalous, out-of-place) to assert A without assuming that B is true.
- ❖ The presupposition should survive in the following contexts:
  - ❖ a. negation ('not A')    b. question ('A?')    c. conditionals ('If A, then...')

- ✿ Example:
- ✿ Does (a) presuppose (b)?
- ✿ a. The king of France likes to play tennis.
- ✿ b. There is a king of France.
- ✿ (5a) definitely seems to assume (5b), but let's test the presupposition in other contexts:
- ✿ c. The king of France doesn't like to play tennis. (negation)
- ✿ d. Does the king of France like to play tennis? (question)
- ✿ e. If the king of France likes to play tennis, then we should build a court for him when he visits. (conditional)
- ✿ (5c), (d), and (e) all still assume (5b) to be true. So (5a) must presuppose (5b).

- ✿ Example:
- ✿ Mary's brother bought three horses.
- ✿ presuppositions: Mary exists, Mary has a brother, Mary has only one brother, Mary's brother is rich
- ✿ speaker's subjective presuppositions, all can be wrong
- ✿ entailments: Mary's brother bought something, bought three animals, two horses, one horse, etc.
- ✿ entailments follow from the sentence regardless of whether the speaker's beliefs are right or wrong

# Speech Acts

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- ❖ To utter something – either orally or in writing – is to do something. The act of speaking is, first and foremost, an act.
- ❖ The theory of speech acts, then, is inherently a pragmatic theory, since it involves an intention on the part of the speaker and an inference on the part of the hearer.
- ❖ In order to know how we are able to understand a speaker's utterance, we must ask how it is that we know what sort of act the speaker intended to perform by means of this utterance. This is the question originally taken up by J.L. Austin in his theory of speech acts.

"When did we hear from him last?"

"Ten days ago, Mr. Rearden."

"All right. Thank you, Gwen. Keep trying to get his office."

"Yes, Mr. Rearden."

She walked out. Mr. Ward was on his feet, hat in hand. He muttered,

"I guess I'd better—"

"Sit down!" Rearden snapped fiercely.

Mr. Ward obeyed, staring at him. (Rand 1957)

# Constitutives and performatives.

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- ❖ Constitutives are declarative utterances expressing some state of affairs
- ❖ a. She walked out.
- ❖ b. Mr. Ward was on his feet, hat in hand.
- ❖ c. Mr. Ward obeyed, staring at him.

- ❖ Performatives, on the other hand, do not express a state of affairs, but rather are used to perform an act.
  - ❖ a. I apologize
  - ❖ b. I promise
- ❖ The utterance of *I apologize* does not describe some act of apologizing, but rather performs the act of apologizing; the utterance itself is the apology.
- ❖ Similarly, the utterance of *I promise* does not (merely) describe a promise, but rather performs the act of promising.

- ❖ Austin uses the term **performative** for instances such as the apology and promise, whose utterance performs the very act that the sentence describes.
- ❖ One test for whether an utterance is a performative is to insert the word *hereby*:
- ❖ I hereby promise
- ❖ I hereby apologize

# More performatives

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- ❖ I thank you
- ❖ I warn you
- ❖ I bet you
- ❖ I pronounce you
- ❖ I swear to tell the truth
- ❖ I name you
- ❖ I request
- ❖ I command you to sit down
- ❖ I christen this ship the *Lord's Vessel*

# Locutionary acts

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- ❖ Austin observed that to perform a speech act involves performing three types of act simultaneously
- ❖ a locutionary act,
- ❖ an illocutionary act, and
- ❖ a perlocutionary act.

# Locutionary acts

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- ✿ The locutionary act is the basic linguistic act of conveying some meaning.
- ✿ *I'm cold*
- ✿ The locutionary act here is to predicate coldness of myself. The locutionary act has to do with "what is said"

# Illocutionary acts

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- ❖ Illocutionary acts add in the intentions of the speaker regarding what act they intended to perform by means of making that utterance.
- ❖ So, as we have observed above, *I'm cold* can be intended to perform any number of acts.
- ❖ It can be intended as a statement of fact, an invitation ("come over and snuggle"), a request ("close the window"), a question ("what's the thermostat set at?"), or even a warning...

- ❖ This act that the speaker is intending to perform – the act of stating, inviting, requesting, asking, and so on – is called the illocutionary act, and expresses *the illocutionary force* of the utterance.
- ❖ Austin distinguishes between locutionary and illocutionary acts by identifying a locutionary act with the performance of an act *of* saying something, whereas an illocutionary act is the performance of an act *in* saying something.
- ❖ The locutionary act is the act of saying something with a certain meaning and reference, whereas the illocutionary act is what you intend to do by means of saying it.

# Perlocutionary acts

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- ✿ **Perlocutionary act:** what is actually achieved by means of the speech act.
- ✿ Whereas the illocutionary act is speaker-based, the perlocutionary act is hearer-based;
- ✿ much as an illocutionary act has an illocutionary force, a perlocutionary act has a **perlocutionary effect** – typically an effect on the person being addressed.
- ✿ In the utterance *I'm cold*, the perlocutionary effect might be one of persuading (e.g., persuading the hearer to close the window).
- ✿ The perlocutionary effect is an effect that the speech act has on the thoughts, feelings, or actions of the addressee or others

# Sociopragmatics

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- ❖ We endorse the view of pragmatics as “the cognitive, social and cultural science of language and communication” (Verschueren 2009: 1). Within this perspective, we refer to the study of language and communication in its social and cultural context *associopragmatics*.
- ❖ Sociopragmatics in a broad sense aims to show how social and cultural factors are brought to bear in language practices, and how they influence pragmatic strategies which are manifested by linguistic forms in particular communicative contexts.
- ❖ It aims to account for their instantiations in empirical socio-cultural contexts and to present cultural, social and situational differences in their manifestation.

# Conclusion

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- ❖ This course is an overview of the field of pragmatics. It intends to provide the students in L3 linguistics (department of English, FHB University) with the specificity of pragmatics as well as the fundamental concepts and major topics of inquiry.
- ❖ The learner is strongly advised to read the reference books and articles and get more from the field of pragmatics.
- ❖ S/he is also advised to make practical analysis of utterances in context, from any language, especially his/her mother tongue.

-the end

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