**Pragmatics II**

**Speech Act theory**

The term speech act covers “**actions**” such as “**requesting**”, “**commanding**”, **questioning**”, and “**informing**". It is typically the case that we the following linguistic “forms” with the following “functions”.

( The forms would be described in the syntactic analysis of a language, and the functions as how people use lang.) **for ex. :**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **FORMS** | **FUNCTIONS** |
| **Did you eat the food?**  **Eat the food ( please).**  **You ate the food.** | **QUESTION**  **COMMAND / REQUEST**  **STATEMENT** |

When a form is used to ask, it is described as a direct speech act. For example, when a speaker does not know something and asks the hearer to inform him, he will typically produce a direct speech act.

**For ex.**

**Can you ride a bicycle?**

**What about?**

**Can you pass me the salt?**

You would not usually understand the utterance as a question about your ability to do something. You would treat it as a request and perform the action requested. Such as an example is described s an indirect speech act.

**Speech Act Theory**

**Austin How to Do Things With Words(1962).**

He believes that linguistic phenomena are basically actions or deeds.

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In his theory, then, the emphasis is on PERFORMATIVE utterances such as:

I resign.

I give you a notice. DECLARATVE sentences

I name this ship Elizabeth**.**

Austin believes that all utterances can take the nature of actions.

**For example**

**You will get paid tomorrow.**

**I promise you that you will get paid tomorrow.**

**What is the time?**

**I ask you to tell me what the time is.**

**Be quiet when I am talking.**

**I order you to be quiet when I am talking.**

**Beavers build dams.**

**I state that beavers build dams.**

Austin took this idea further, in claiming that the same utterance could at the same time constitute three kinds of act:

1. **A LOCUTIONARY ACT (or LOCUTION):**

**The act of uttering some expression with a particular sense or reference.**

1. **An ILLICUTIONARY ACT (or illocution)**

**The act performed in, or by virtue, the performance of the locution.**

**For ex.**

**He urged, or requested, or invited to shoot her.**

**We can say that what was said had the FORCE of that illocution**

**(e.g. of a request, or an invitation).**

1. **A PERLOCUTIONARY ACT (or perlocution)**

**The act performed by the means of what is said.**

**He persuaded me to shoot her.**

Austin focused on the illocutionary act (2) because

the LOCUTION (1) is in the interest of Semantics.

The perlocution (3) belongs beyond the investigation of lang. and meaning, since it deals with the effect, or result, of an utterance.

The illocution (2) occupies the middle ground between the item: the ground now considered the territory of Pragmatics, of meaning in context.

The verbs used to describe illocutions- such as claim, promise, beg, thank and declare- can generally be used as performative verbs,

**For ex. I beg you.**

**To understand meaning , there are linguistic indicators and non-linguistic indicators.**

**John Searle**

**Speech Acts: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Language (1969).**

Searle took even further than Austin the idea that meaning is a kind of doing: he believed that the study of lang. belongs to the theory of action.

He crystallized the concepts of illocutionary act and illocutionary force to the extent where one can speak of Searle’s “**Speech- Act Theory**”.

The interest of his work for pragmatics, like that of Austin, centers around illocutionary acts and illocutionary force (understood as the functions or meanings associated with illocutionary acts).

Therefore, when we use the term “Speech Act Theory” in pragmatics, we in practice refer to illocutionary acts.

**Searle’s Speech Act Theory**

Searle divided speech acts into five categories:

1. **ASSERTIVES**

(e.g. stating, claiming, reporting, announcing)

1. **DIRECTIVES**

(e.g. ordering, requesting, demanding, begging)

1. **COMMISIVES**

(e.g. promising, offering, swearing to do something)

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1. **EXPRESSIVES**

(e.g. thanking, apologizing, congratulating

1. **DECLARATIONS**

(e.g. naming a ship, resigning, sentences, dismissing)

**Grice: Logic and Convesation(1975)**

Grice was interested in explaining the difference between what is said and what is meant.

“What is said?” is what the words mean at their face value (***the explicit meaning***).

“ What is meant?” is the effect that the speaker intends to produce on the addressee by virtue of the addressee’s recognition of this intention, (***the implicit meaning***).

In his attempt to solve the problem of the implicit meaning, Grice (1975) offers what he calls “The Co-operative Principle (CP)”.

**Consider the following example:**

A: Where’s Janet?

B: Uh- She was walking in the direction of the post office five minutes ago.

To give a reasonable explanation, Grice (1975) spoke of what is called CP.

**The CP**

**For example**

**Can you pass me the salt?**

What motivation is there for seeking a message behind the literal message?

Indirect communication works only by virtue of a basic, shared assumption that when people speak and listen to each other, they normally do have the intention of accomplishing purposeful and effective communication in the context.

This assumption is called “CP”, and it can be viewed as a large-scale appropriateness condition governing language use .

CP represents our knowledge that verbal communication is an activity in which individuals work together to accomplish, shared mutual beneficial goals.

**The Co-Operative Principle**

can be expanded into four maxims:

***The maxim of Quantity***

Try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

***The maxim of quantity:***

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange.
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

***The maximum of relation***

Make your contribution relevant.

***The maxim of manner***

1. Avoid obscurity
2. Avoid ambiguity
3. Be brief
4. Be orderly

The CP is crucial to all communication but its role comes particularly to the fore in indirect communication, where lang. users cooperate to the extent of relying on unspoken inferences to effect the communication. Sometimes communicative breakdowns are intentional; other times people choose not to fulfill the CP .People lie, for ex., or withhold information, or try to confuse the addressee.

**The CP (Def.)**

A term derived from the work of the philosopher Grice as part of the study of conversational structure. At its simplest, the principle states that the speaker try to cp-operate with each other when communicating; they will, in particular, attempt to be informative, truthful, relevant and clear (MAXIMS------).

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Listeners will normally assume that a speaker is following these criteria. Speakers may break these maxims( in lying, sarcasm,--- etc.), but conversation proceeds on the assumption that they do not. It is then possible to deduce implications from what has been said concerning what has not been said (conversational IMPLICATURES), though the extent to which this can be done is controversial.

**What about advertising?**

It involves a pretence that communication is primary for the benefit of the addressee, while the addressee knows that in reality the speaker has his/her own economic interest at heart.

**Conversational Implicature**

**For ex.**

1. **Many of the girls**

implicates that

1. **“not all the girls”**

Thus we say that **(1)** conversationally implicates **(2).**

**For ex.**

**She was poor, but she was honest.**

The word “ but” carries the implicature that for a person to be poor is a good reason for supposing him not to be honest.

**For ex.**

**She was honest and poor.**

The speaker might be implicating that it is unusual for anyone to be both poor and honest.