

April 4, 2006

CLASS 22: SPEECH ACTS

MORE ON PRESUPPOSITIONS

A. *The Cancellation Approach*

- does this sentence *presuppose* that John Smith has children?
- (1) If all the Smith brothers have children, then John Smith's children will probably inherit the family fortune.
- not all presuppositions seem *cancelable*
- (2) ??John came to the party too, though nobody else did.

B. *Pragmatic Presupposition*

- (3) *Common Ground (CG)*
The common ground denotes the set of propositions which the participants in a conversation agree to be uncontroversial for the purposes of this conversation.
- (4) *Context Set (C)*
The context set denotes the set of possible worlds in which every proposition in the Common Ground is true.
- (5) $CG = \{\text{the proposition that it is raining, the proposition that Mary is in the room, the proposition that Shelby is a nice dog}\}$
- (6) $C = \text{the set of worlds in which it is raining and Mary is in the room and Shelby is a nice dog}$
- (7) a. HANNIBAL is a nice dog too.
b. For any Context Set C , *HANNIBAL is a nice dog too* can only be used in C if C entails that some other dog is nice.

C. *Accommodation*

- (8) It stopped raining.
- (9) Mary arrived late, too.
- (10) The woman likes beans.

D. Context Change Potential

(11) For any Context Set C and simple sentence S, $C + S = C \cap \parallel S \parallel$

(12) Shelby ate a bone and Hannibal ate a bone too.

(13) *The Conjunction Rule*

For any Context Set C and conjoined sentence φ and ψ ,

$C + (\varphi \text{ and } \psi) = ((C + \varphi) + \psi)$.

(14) $C + \textit{Shelby ate a bone and Hannibal ate a bone too}$

$= ((C + \textit{Shelby ate a bone}) + \textit{Hannibal ate a bone too})$

(15) a. It is raining, and Hannibal ate a bone too.

b. Hannibal ate a bone too, and Shelby also ate a bone.

Task 4: Explain how these sentences are added to the Context Set step by step.

SPEECH ACTS

Austin (1962), as quoted from PHP (p. 190):

“the meaning of many sentences does not seem particularly tied up with their judging the world to be a certain way; rather, what’s crucial about them seems to be that they have a certain kind of effect on the world (on the speaker, hearer, or social environment)”

(16) a. I now declare you man and wife.

b. I hereby warn you not to come onto my property again!

c. I promise.

- distinction of sentences into *performatives* and *constatives*
- for a sentence to function as a performative: *felicity conditions*

(17) That dog is cute.

(18) a. Who did you see at the party?

b. Eat your beans!

Searle (1969) expands the general theory of *speech acts*:

(i) *illocutionary act*: phonetics / -ology, syntax, semantics (sound / form / proposition)

(ii) *locutionary act*: communicative action (speaker / intention & hearer / performance)

(iii) *perlocutionary act*: effects speaker brings about (by locutionary & illocutionary acts)