

Figurative language

- Literal interpretation vs figurative interpretation (figures of speech)
- **Irony:** Spenber and Wilson = an utterance that is not appropriate to the context (e.g. saying “Nice weather today, isn’t it?” while it’s raining outside); Clark and Gerrig = S pretends to convey a meaning, but s/he actually wants to say the contrary; Grice = irony is used to criticise what we are saying or who would say it sincerely
- **Metaphor:** identifying something/someone by something/someone else that does not literally belong to the same class of entities (e.g. All the world’s a stage). Metaphors are class-inclusion assertions (Glucksberg and Keysar) – “something/someone is (a) something/someone else [known as **vehicle**]”
- **Simile:** “something/someone is *like* (a) something/someone else”. Similes are literally true, unlike metaphors (e.g. You’re like a baby. Just shut up!)
- **Metonymy:** a specific case of metaphor where a person/thing is mentioned through a vehicle that has a close relation with the person/thing described (e.g. The White House spoke yesterday about the new economic crisis).

Have a go with pragmatics

ROMEO: But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

(R&J, 2.2)

TYBALT: What wouldst thou have with me?

MERCUTIO: Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives

(R&J, 3.1)

LADY CAPULET: Alack the day, she's dead, she's dead, she's dead!

CAPULET: Ha! let me see her: out, alas! she's cold:

Her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff;

Life and these lips have long been separated:

Death lies on her like an untimely frost

Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.

(R&J, 4.5)

Discourse

- A group of utterances
- **(In)definiteness:** characteristic of some noun phrases. Definite forms are something (called topic) S and H know about (background knowledge): proper names, determiners (definite article, possessives, demonstratives), personal pronouns; indefinite forms add new info: determiners (indefinite article, quantifiers, absence of determiner[s] when the noun is plural), indefinite pronouns (something, anybody, no one, etc.)
- How to convey given and new info: cleft sentences ("a sentence that is divided into two clauses in order to show which information is new" *OED*) and co.
 1. Pseudo-clefts = sentences with 3 components: 1) A **wh-clause** that indicates the presupposition, 2) the **verb "to be"**, 3) A **noun phrase** that presents the new info (e.g. A: What do you want from me? B: **What I want from you is the truth!**)
 2. It-clefts = a sentence that places emphasis on a noun phrase in contrast with another. 4 components: 1) **It**, 2) **verb "to be"**, 3) **noun phrase** with the new info, 4) a **clause** that specifies the new info (e.g. A: Who are you talking about? B: **It's John I'm talking about** [not someone else])
 3. Passives. In English 1) given info generally precedes new info; moreover, 2) the subject slot is usually occupied by an animate being. When one of these two characteristics is not respected in the passive forms, the H understands that there is a particular communicative reason

Have a go with pragmatics

JUGHEAD: You really want us to watch a gross dating show?

VERONICA: What I want is for you guys to meet my dad officially.
(*Riverdale*, s02e03)



LILITH: Do you wanna see my real one? I mean, my... green one?

SABRINA: No. No, what I want is Nick outta here.
(*The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, s03,e01)

Cooperative principle (CP)

- Grice (1975)
- Inferences are not possible unless S and H adhere to certain conventions (or conversational maxims)
 1. Maxim of **quantity**: provide necessary information, no less no more than needed (e.g. A: What time is it? B: It's 8:30pm, ~~we should have dinner~~)
 2. Maxim of **relevance**: be relevant, i.e., make your contribution relevant to the goals of the conversation (e.g. A: What time is it? B: ~~Well, we could go out for a walk, it's warm today~~)
 3. Maxim of **manner**: say things clearly, briefly and orderly (e.g. A: What time is it? B: ~~I was thinking about going to do some shopping. Ah, BTW it's 4pm. Do you mind taking the dog to my parents? Oh, yes, but I need to take a shower before~~)
 4. Maxim of **quality**: do not say what you believe to be false. Be truthful (e.g. A: What time is it? B: ~~Well, it might be 6 or 7pm, but I need to check on my mobile that's in the other room~~)
- Conversational implicature: an inference drawn on the assumption that 1) S and H conform to the CP and 2) they have background and/or situational knowledge. In other words, S&H are able to infer the content of an utterance, going beyond its "literal" meaning, if they know how communication work

Implicatures

- **Quantity implicature:** consequence of the maxim of quality and quantity. The H infers that the S does not know the real answer and so s/he gives extra information to make the H grasp the truth (e.g. A: Has Bob gone out? B: Well, I can't see his car in the front yard. *The H infers that John may have gone out, but the S hasn't said that*). A particular kind of quantity implicature is the **scalar implicature** which involves modals, gradable adjectives/adverbs/verbs (e.g. A: OMG, do you love him? B: I really like him; A: OMG, do you love him? B: Might be so)
- **Relevance implicature:** certain utterances are expected to be followed by others (e.g. questions are expected to be followed by answers. A: OMG, do you love him? B: Nice weather today, isn't it?)
- **Manner implicature:** H expects that the S's utterance is chronologically ordered and so that speech is linear (e.g. A: What did you do yesterday? B: Got up at 7am, drove my child to school and had breakfast, OR got up at 7am, had breakfast and drove my child to school)
- **Presupposition:** background assumptions = the H already knows something about the language spoken, about certain entities, about previous facts that happened (common knowledge). The most common is the "existential" presupposition expressed through a noun phrase (e.g. "Where's Tom?" presupposes that S and H know a certain Tom, who exists). Other presuppositions can be accommodated: the H receives additional info which becomes common knowledge (e.g. in the dialogue A: Where's Mr. Walsh? B: Tom Walsh is upstairs. A: Thank you, the hearer A receives information about Mr. Walsh's first name and accommodates it to their common knowledge, without asking "Who's Tom?"). Some presuppositions are introduced by **factives**: linguistic items known as presupposition triggers that include verbs such as 'regret', 'matter', 'realise', 'explain', 'be+odd, sorry, aware, etc'. Factives introduce presuppositions that S considers to be true (e.g. I told you the train was late. 'Tell' introduces a presupposition 'the train was late' that S considers to be true)

Have a go with pragmatics

SCAR: Simba. ... What have you done?

SIMBA: There was a stampede and he tried to save me... It was an accident, I... I didn't mean for it to happen... What am I gonna do?

SCAR: Run away, Simba.... Run.... Run away, and never return.

(The Lion King)



DUMBLEDORE: After all this time?

SNAPE: Always.

Have a go with pragmatics



ANASTASIA: Ready?

CHRISTIAN: Whenever you are. [...]

ANASTASIA: To what do you owe...

CHRISTIAN: To what do I owe my success?

ANASTASIA: Yep.

CHRISTIAN: Seriously?

ANASTASIA: Yes. [...]

CHRISTIAN: The key to my success is identifying talents in individuals. And harnessing their efforts.

ANASTASIA: You're a control freak?

CHRISTIAN: Oh I exercise control in all things Miss Steele.

ANASTASIA: Okay um, your company is involved primarily in the telecommunications sector. Yet you also invest in numerous agricultural projects. Including several in Africa. Is that something you feel passionate about?

CHRISTIAN: Feeding the world's poor? It's smart business. You don't agree?

ANASTASIA: I don't know enough about it.

Politeness

- Pragmatic principle that assumes that all of us have a certain social self-image to be preserved
- **Face** (Goffman 1967) = social self-image
- Brown and Levinson (1978/87): **positive face** = desire to be admired, loved and accepted within society; **negative face** = desire not to be disturbed or obstacle
- When a S endangers the H's face, s/he performs a **face-threatening act (FTA)**
- Politeness: behaviour that tries to minimise the threat a S addressed to a H's face (it can be positive or negative politeness, depending on the fact that politeness is addressed to the H's positive or negative face). Strategic politeness: when S and/or H feel their face is threatened they use politeness to prevent the risk of losing the other's appreciation. Non-strategic politeness is indicated as discernment politeness or politic behaviour.
- Negative politeness has two forms: 1) non-impositional politeness: giving or pretending to give the H an option, 2) deference politeness: S submits and respects the H.



Politeness in history: Early Modern English

Notice admirable qualities, possessions, etc.

- Many studies about Shakespeare (positive politeness)

BENVOLIO. I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire:
The day is hot, the Capulets abroad,
And, if we meet, we shall not scape a brawl;
For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring. (3.1.1-4)

Include both S and H in the activity

Give reasons

- Negative politeness

NURSE. Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo?

ROMEO. I can tell you, but young Romeo will be older when you have found him than he was when you sought him: I am the youngest of that name, for fault of a worse. (2.4.97-101)

Give deference

Be conventionally indirect

- In Shakespeare, positive politeness is more widespread than negative (Kopytko)



Impoliteness in Early Modern English

- Culpeper (1996, 2001, 2005): impoliteness strategies mirror Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies – politeness enhances the H's face in order to minimize FTAs, impoliteness, on the contrary, attacks the H's face

TYBALT: Romeo, the hate I bear **thee** can afford
No better term than this,--**thou** art a villain.

→ Call the other names

ROMEO: Tybalt, the reason that I have to love **thee**
Doth much excuse the appertaining rage
To such a greeting: villain am I none;
Therefore farewell; I see **thou** know'st me not.

→ Use inappropriate identity markers

TYBALT: Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries
That **thou** hast done me; therefore turn and draw.

ROMEO: I do protest, I never injured **thee**,
But love **thee** better than **thou** canst devise,
Till **thou** shalt know the reason of my love:
And so, good Capulet,--which name I tender
As dearly as my own,--be satisfied.

MERCUTIO: O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!
~~Alla stoccata carries it away.~~ [Draws]
Tybalt, **you** rat-catcher, will you walk?

You: respect
Thou: intimacy, insult

→ Call the other names

Main politeness strategies analysed so far



○ Politeness (Brown and Levinson):

1. Positive politeness (a. Notice admirable qualities, possessions, etc., b. include both S and H in the activity, c. Give reasons)
2. Negative politeness (a. Give deference, b. Be conventionally indirect)



○ Impoliteness (Culpeper):

Positive impoliteness

- (a. Call the other names, b. Use inappropriate identity markers)



Have a go with (im)politeness

- p. 128 (*English Historical Pragmatics*)



MERCUTIO. Signior Romeo, bon jour! there's a French salutation to your French slop. You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night.

ROMEO. Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you?

MERCUTIO. The ship, sir, the slip; can you not conceive?

ROMEO. Pardon, good Mercutio, my business was great; and in such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy.

MERCUTIO. That's as much as to say, such a case as yours constrains a man to bow in the hams.

ROMEO. Meaning, to court'sy.

MERCUTIO. Thou hast most kindly hit it.

ROMEO. A most courteous exposition.

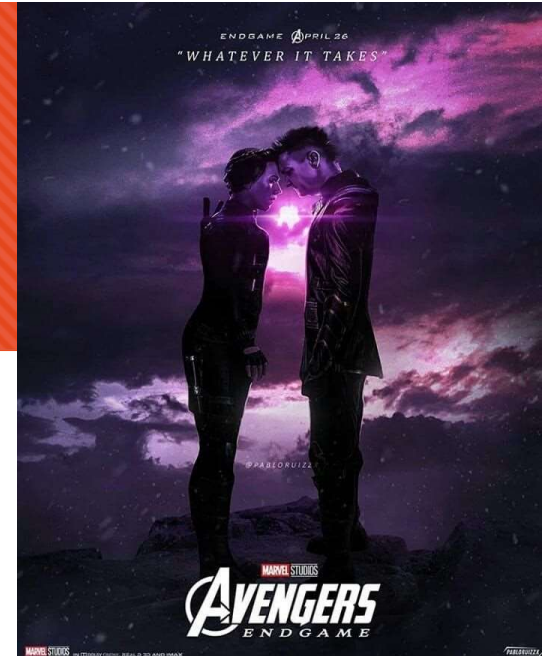
MERCUTIO. Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.

ROMEO. Pink for flower.

MERCUTIO. Right.

ROMEO. Why, then is my pump well flowered. (2.4.38-52)

Have a go with pragmatics



NATASHA ROMANOFF: If we don't get that stone, billions of people stay dead.

CLINT BARTON: Then I guess we both know who it's gotta be.

NATASHA ROMANOFF: I guess we do.

CLINT BARTON: I'm starting to think— we mean different people here, Natasha.

NATASHA ROMANOFF: For the last five years I've been trying to do one thing: Get to right here. That's all it's been about. Bringing everybody back.

CLINT BARTON: Oh, don't you get all decent on me now.

NATASHA ROMANOFF: What, you think I wanna do it? I'm trying to save your life, you idiot.

CLINT BARTON: Yeah, well, I don't want you to, because I— Natasha, you know what I've done. You know what I've become.

NATASHA ROMANOFF: I don't judge people on their worst mistakes.

CLINT BARTON: Maybe you should.

NATASHA ROMANOFF: You didn't.

CLINT BARTON: You're a pain in my ass, you know that?...Okay. You win...Tell my family I love them.

NATASHA ROMANOFF: You tell them yourself.