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## **EGG 2018: Intro to pragmatics (week 2)**

Session 1: The basic ideas – Gricean pragmatics 1

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## Semantics vs. pragmatics

The traditional divide:

- ▶ **Semantics:** truth-conditional meaning  
⇒ which situations can a given sentence describe truthfully?  
(1) Alex is in Banja Luka and is attending EGG.



## Semantics vs. pragmatics

### The traditional divide:

- ▶ **Semantics:** truth-conditional meaning
  - ⇒ which situations can a given sentence describe truthfully?
  - (1) Alex is in Banja Luka and is attending EGG.
- ▶ **Pragmatics:** anything meaning-related that is connected to the use of an expression
  - ⇒ in which contexts is it acceptable to use a given sentence?
  - (2) A: What did Alex do this summer?  
 B: Alex attended EGG and spent some days in Croatia.  
 B': Alex spent some days in Croatia and attended EGG.



## Semantics vs. pragmatics – II

### Difficulty:

it is often not clear whether meaning that we intuitively perceive for a given sentence/expression should be attributed to the truth-conditional level or whether it is connected to its use in the particular context

⇒ has to be determined for each expression independently!



## Semantics vs. pragmatics – II

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**Goal of this course:** introduce the traditional topics discussed in connection with pragmatic aspects of meaning

- ▶ conversational implicatures
- ▶ presuppositions
- ▶ speech acts
- ▶ conventional implicatures

⇒ this lecture is based on Grice 1975, Gamut 1991, and Kadmon 1991



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## Roadmap

Pragmatics: a characterization

The cases of 'and' and 'or'

Grice 1975: cooperativity and conversational maxims

Summary



## And – I

What is the truth-conditional contribution of *and*? In which situations is (3) true?

- (3) Alex is in Banja Luka and is attending EGG.



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What is the truth-conditional contribution of *and*? In which situations is (3) true?

(3) Alex is in Banja Luka and is attending EGG.

Analysis of the truth-conditional connector  $\wedge$  in classical logic:

A	B	$A \wedge B$
1	1	1
1	0	0
0	1	0
0	0	0

Does natural language *and* have the same semantics as  $\wedge$ ?

$\Rightarrow$  (3) suggests that yes





## And – II

Do the intuitions connected to (4) fit the analysis of *and* as  $\wedge$ ?

- (4) A: What did Alex do this summer?  
B: Alex attended EGG and spent some days in Croatia.  
B': Alex spent some days in Croatia and attended EGG.



## And – II

Do the intuitions connected to (4) fit the analysis of *and* as  $\wedge$ ?

- (4) A: What did Alex do this summer?  
 B: Alex attended EGG and spent some days in Croatia.  
 B': Alex spent some days in Croatia and attended EGG.

**Intuition:** sometimes *and* seems to contribute the meaning of *and then*

⇒ Are there two *ands* or does this intuition result from the use of *and*?

⇒ How can we decide?



## ***And* – III**

- (5) Alex is in Banja Luka. She is attending EGG.



## **And – III**

- (5) Alex is in Banja Luka. She is attending EGG.
- (6) A: What did Alex do this summer?  
B: She attended EGG. She spent time in Croatia. She returned home at the end of August.  
B': Alex spent time in Croatia. She attended EGG. She returned home at the end of August.



## And – III

- (5) Alex is in Banja Luka. She is attending EGG.
- (6) A: What did Alex do this summer?  
 B: She attended EGG. She spent time in Croatia. She returned home at the end of August.  
 B': Alex spent time in Croatia. She attended EGG. She returned home at the end of August.

**Observation:** similar temporal sequencing effect without *and*



## And – IV

► Assumption of two *ands*:

⇒ predicts sentences with *and* to be ambiguous

⇒ cannot explain the effect in (6); no *and*!



## And – IV

- ▶ **Assumption of two *ands*:**
  - ⇒ predicts sentences with *and* to be ambiguous
  - ⇒ cannot explain the effect in (6); no *and*!
  
- ▶ **Assumption of a use-related process:**
  - ⇒ does not predict ambiguity for sentences with *and*
  - ⇒ can be adopted to also account for (6)



## ***And – V***

How can we account for (4) and (6) with a use-related process?





## And – V

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**Assumption:** The use of *and* and sequences of utterances as in (6) is governed by an **additional pragmatic principle**.

(7) Events should be told in the sequence in which they happened.



## And – V

How can we account for (4) and (6) with a use-related process?

**Assumption:** The use of *and* and sequences of utterances as in (6) is governed by an **additional pragmatic principle**.

(7) Events should be told in the sequence in which they happened.

Compatible with a **retraction of the suggested ordering**:

(8) Alex attended EGG and spent some days in Croatia, but I don't know what she did first.

⇒ also problematic if two *ands* are assumed!



## Or – I

What is the truth-conditional contribution of *or*? In which situations is (9) true?

(9) Alex joined the walking tour, or she went rafting.



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(9) Alex joined the walking tour, or she went rafting.

Analysis of the truth-conditional connector  $\vee$  in classical logic:

A	B	$A \vee B$
1	1	1
1	0	1
0	1	1
0	0	0

Does natural language *or* have the same semantics as the inclusive disjunction  $\vee$ ?

Is *or* inclusive? Or is it exclusive?



## Or – II

Analysis of the **truth-conditional connector**  $\vee$  in classical logic:

A	B	$A \vee B$
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0	1	1
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Are there natural language expressions that clearly express exclusive disjunction  $\vee$ ?



## Or – II

Analysis of the **truth-conditional connector**  $\vee$  in classical logic:

A	B	$A \vee B$
1	1	0
1	0	1
0	1	1
0	0	0

Are there natural language expressions that clearly express exclusive disjunction  $\vee$ ?

- (10)
- Either Alex joined the walking tour, or she went rafting.
  - Alex went rafting unless she joined the rafting tour.



## Or – III

How can we decide whether plain *or* is inclusive or exclusive?

(11) [Context: It's Wednesday. A and B talk about B's plans.]

A: What are you going to do on the weekend?

B: I'll join the walking tour, or I'll go rafting.

⇒ Did B say something false if she ended up doing both?

⇒ Did B say something false if she ended up doing neither?



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(12) Customers who are teachers or college students are entitled to a special reduction. (Tarski 1939:21 cited in Gamut 1991: 200)

⇒ What about students who teach?





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⇒ What about students who teach?

Analyzing *or* as expressing  $\vee$  cannot capture these examples!



## Or – IV

How can we explain intuitions that *or* expresses exclusive disjunction?

(13) Alex joined the walking tour, or she went rafting.

⇒ strongly suggests that Alex did one but not both



## Or – IV

How can we explain intuitions that *or* expresses exclusive disjunction?

(13) Alex joined the walking tour, or she went rafting.

⇒ strongly suggests that Alex did one but not both

The use of *or* is regulated by two conditions:

- 1) Use *or* if you believe one of the disjuncts is true but don't know which.
- 2) The two disjuncts need to be connected in some respect.

⇒ not part of the truth-conditional meaning!



## Or: condition 1

**Condition 1:** Use *or* if you believe one of the disjuncts is true but don't know which.

- (14)
- a. Alex likes beer or rakija.
  - b. Alex likes beer and rakija.
  - c. Alex likes beer.



## Or: condition 1

**Condition 1:** Use *or* if you believe one of the disjuncts is true but don't know which.

- (14)
- a. Alex likes beer or rakija.
  - b. Alex likes beer and rakija.
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► If you believe that Alex likes beer and rakija, you state (14-b).



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- ▶ If you believe that Alex likes beer and rakija, you state (14-b).
- ▶ If you believe that Alex likes beer only, you state (14-c).



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          b. Alex likes beer and rakija.  
          c. Alex likes beer.

- ▶ If you believe that Alex likes beer and rakija, you state (14-b).
- ▶ If you believe that Alex likes beer only, you state (14-c).

Condition 1 can be ignored if it is contextually warranted:

- (15)     A: Does Alex like beer or rakija? I didn't buy any other drinks.  
          B: Yes, she does (like beer or rakija). She likes beer.



## Or: condition 2

**Condition 2:** The two disjuncts need to be connected in some respect.

(16) Alex likes beer, or Mary is from Germany.

⇒ When can (16) be uttered?

Example (16) becomes natural in a context that connects the truths of the two clauses in some way.

- (17) A: Which of the following three statements are true? Alex likes beer. Mary is from Germany. Banka Luka is in Croatia.  
 B: Banja Luka is definitely not in Croatia. So: Alex likes beer, or Mary is from Germany. Or both.





## Interim conclusion

- ▶ For the natural language connectors *and* and *or*, we need to distinguish their truth-conditional contributions from additional pragmatic conditions.

$$(18) \quad \textit{and} = \wedge \qquad \textit{or} = \vee$$

- ▶ Condition guiding the use of *and*:
  - Events should be told in the sequence in which they happened.
- ▶ Conditions guiding the use of *or*:
  - Use *or* if you believe one disjunct is true but don't know which.
  - The two disjuncts need to be connected in some respect.
- ▶ These conditions can be violated explicitly or implicitly (if the context allows it).

Are these conditions independently derivable or do they need to be stored with the lexical items?



## Roadmap

Pragmatics: a characterization

The cases of 'and' and 'or'

Grice 1975: cooperativity and conversational maxims

Summary



## Grice's cooperative principle (Grice 1975: 26)

Grice notes that talk exchanges (= discourses) are a “cooperative effort” to meet a common purpose:

(19) **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.



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Grice notes that talk exchanges (= discourses) are a “cooperative effort” to meet a common purpose:

(19) **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.

- ▶ “as is required” = guided by certain norms
- ▶ “at the stage at which it occurs” = depending on the discourse context
- ▶ “by the accepted purpose” = guided by a shared communicative goal

**Central assumption:** interlocutors observe the cooperative principle



## Gricean maxims (Grice 1975: 26–27)

- ▶ **Maxim of Quantity:**
  - ▶ Make your contribution to the conversation as informative as is required.
  - ▶ Do not make your contribution any more informative than necessary.
- ▶ **Maxim of Quality:**
  - ▶ Do not say what you believe is false.
  - ▶ Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
- ▶ **Maxim of Relation:** Be relevant.
- ▶ **Maxim of Manner:**
  - ▶ Avoid obscurity of expression.
  - ▶ Avoid ambiguity.
  - ▶ Be brief.
  - ▶ Be orderly.



## Condition for *and*

### Condition:

Events should be told in the sequence in which they happened.

- (20) Alex attended EGG and spent some time in Croatia.  
⇒ first EGG, then Croatia

How can this condition be derived based on the Gricean maxims?



## Condition for *and*

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How can this condition be derived based on the Gricean maxims?

- ▶ The speaker observes the cooperative principle and the conversational maxims.
- ▶ **Maxim of Manner:** be orderly!
- ▶ It is orderly to state events in the order in which they happened.
  - ⇒ Alex's attending EGG happened first
  - ⇒ Alex's spending some time in Croatia happened second



## Conditions for *or* – I

**Condition 1:** Use *or* if you believe one of the disjuncts is true but don't know which.

- (21)
- a. Alex likes beer or rakija.
  - b. Alex likes beer and rakija.
  - c. Alex likes beer.
  - d. Alex likes rakija.

How can this condition be derived based on the Gricean maxims?





## Conditions for *or* – I

**Condition 1:** Use *or* if you believe one of the disjuncts is true but don't know which.

- (21)
- Alex likes beer or rakija.
  - Alex likes beer and rakija.
  - Alex likes beer.
  - Alex likes rakija.

How can this condition be derived based on the Gricean maxims?

**Maxim of Quantity:** Make your contribution to the conversation as informative as is required!

- ▶ In circumstances other than the one described in condition 1, the speaker can make more informative statements:
  - ▶ speaker believes both options to be true → use *and*
  - ▶ speaker believes one specific option to be true → state that option
- ▶ **more informative = excludes more states the world might be in**



## Conditions for *or* – II

**Condition 2:** The two disjuncts need to be connected in some respect.

- (22) a. Alex likes beer, or she likes rakija.  
b. Alex likes beer, or Mary is from Germany.

Can this condition be derived based on the Gricean maxims?



## Conditions for *or* – II

**Condition 2:** The two disjuncts need to be connected in some respect.

- (22) a. Alex likes beer, or she likes rakija.  
b. Alex likes beer, or Mary is from Germany.

Can this condition be derived based on the Gricean maxims?

- ▶ **Maxim of Relation:** be relevant!
- ▶ The two disjuncts are part of the same utterance and are addressed at the same time.
- ▶ The two options described by the disjuncts need to be equally relevant to the discourse “at the stage at which it occurs”.
- ▶ **equally relevant = ??**
  - ⇒ relevance not as straightforwardly translatable as informativity
  - ⇒ more recent proposal: relevance = relation to current question under discussion (QUD) (see Roberts 2012)



## Conversational implicatures (Grice 1975: 32–37)

Conversational implicatures are pragmatic inferences based on the truth-conditional content of an utterance and the Gricean maxims

They may arise as a result of:

- ▶ observing the maxims
  - ▶ *and* connecting eventive conjuncts: there is a temporal sequence
  - ▶ *or*: the relevant conjunction and neither of the disjuncts are true



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- ▶ ignoring one maxim for the sake of another

- (23) A: Where does Peter live?  
 B: Somewhere in the South of France.



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- ▶ ignoring one maxim for the sake of another

(23) A: Where does Peter live?  
B: Somewhere in the South of France.

- ▶ explicitly and openly flouting a maxim

(24) A: I told Peter that his new haircut looks stupid.  
B: You're a really good friend.



## Summary

- ▶ Semantics and pragmatics are both concerned with meaning conveyed by natural language expressions.
- ▶ **Traditional distinction:**
  - ▶ **Semantics:** truth-conditional content
  - ▶ **Pragmatics:** other content that is expressed
- ▶ **Examples:** conjunction *and*, disjunction *or*  
⇒ aspects connected to the truth-conditions and the use
- ▶ **Grice 1975:** all conversation is guided by the cooperative principle and its related conversational maxims  
⇒ conditions on use of *and/or* derivable from the maxims



## Literatur

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