

Open Learning

Translation Department

Third Year
Second Term

Semantics & Syntax

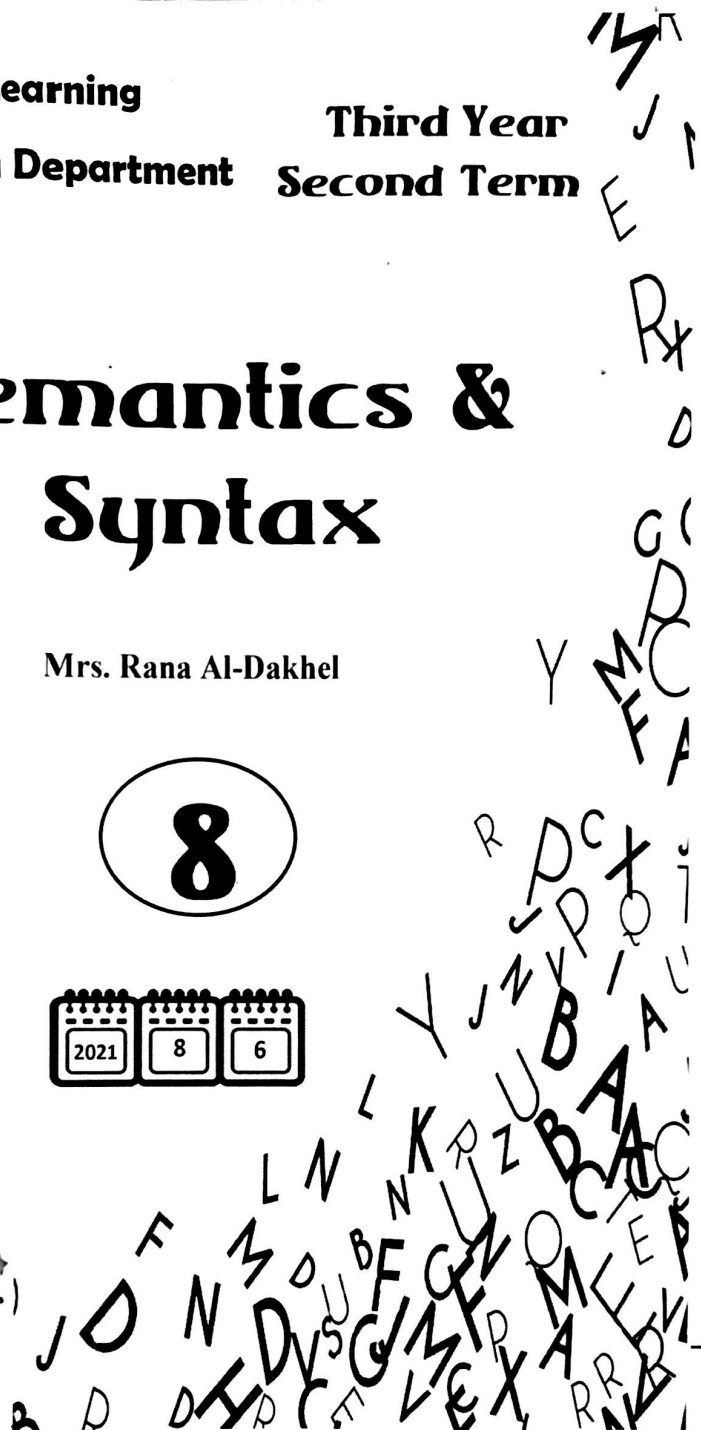
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ALANWAR
موسسة النور التعليمية

Let's study!
English



GOOD MORNING EVERYONE!

Pragmatics

What is the meaning of pragmatics?

Student: it is about the meaning beyond lines, and it is related to the context.

Professor: excellent!

So, **pragmatics** is related to the **context**. It is related to the interpretation of meaning, by using context. We call it sometimes **functional meaning**.

It is different from semantics, which is concerned with the meaning of words, phrases, utterances, and how they are combined together.

We have two types of pragmatics:

1. **Linguistic context:** it is concerned with words or phrases that can be interpreted.

2. **Situational context:** it is concerned with the environment. It is related to the language.

Discourse analysis

Discourse is the largest linguistic unit. It is larger than a sentence or a paragraph.

We combine words and phrases to form a sentence, and we combine sentences to form a paragraph. However, when we combine sentences and paragraphs, we form a discourse. Books are an example of a discourse.

Discourse analysis is concerned with how those linguistic units are combined together to convey a certain message.

Let us start with linguistic context.

Pronouns

Pronouns all the time refer to a **noun phrase**. They should be close to what they refer to.

E.g. *Jane bit herself.*

“Herself” is a reflexive pronoun. It refers to Jane.

E.g. *John believes him.*

Here, we do not know to whom “him” refers. We need a context.

E.g. *John believes that he is a genius.*

“He” refers to John.

We call “John” the antecedent.

We notice that the antecedent “John” and the pronoun “he” come within different clauses.

So, to be able to identify the reference of a pronoun, they should be close to each other, but it is NOT necessarily to have the antecedent and the pronoun within the same clause.

E.g. *it seems that the man loves the woman. Many people think that he loves her.*

“The man” and “the woman” are the antecedents of “he” and “she.” Here, we have a context. So, we say that the pronouns are related to linguistic context.

Bound & Free Pronouns

Bound pronouns are related to first and second pronouns.

First pronouns: I, we.

Second pronouns: you.

They could be free or could be bound. If there is a context, it is bound. If not, it is free.

Deixis

E.g. *I met this person today.*

We cannot understand which person we are talking about; we have no reference.

We call *this*, *that*, *those*, and *these* demonstrative pronouns. They are deixis related to persons.

We have **time** deixis, such as *now* and *yesterday*.

E.g. *I met her yesterday.*

We do not understand if “yesterday” means the day before or the past in general.

E.g. *she is travelling next week.*

We do not understand which next week she means. We need a context.

We have **place** deixis, such as *there* and *here*.

E.g. *I will meet you there.*

We do not understand what is meant by “there” because we have no context. That is why we need pragmatics.

We have deixis related to **directions**.

E.g. *turn right.*

Let us say that we are standing in opposite positions. You do not know if I mean my right or your right.

We always need a context, and this is the function of pragmatics.

Situational Context

We will talk about maxims of conversation. We have four maxims of conversation invented by Grice, a British philosopher. This is related to situational context, which means that here we need a situation.

This is a theory called cooperative principle. This is in conversations.

1. Maxim of quantity

We should be informative as possible as it is required; neither more nor less.

We violate the maxim of quantity when we provide little information or too much information.

Example:

Speaker 1: what are you reading?

Speaker 2: words, words, words.

I cannot understand what he really means by this answer. Here, the speaker violates the maxim of quantity.

2. Maxim of relevance

The information should be relevant.

Example:

Speaker 1: how is the weather today?

Speaker 2: there is a movie on channel 4.

His answer is not related to my question.

3. Maxim of manner

You should be clear (unambiguous), brief, and orderly (organized).

If someone asked you about your relatives, and you answered, "Visiting relatives can be boring."

The answer could either mean visiting relatives is something boring or your relatives themselves are boring.

So, this sentence is ambiguous, and it violates the maxim of manner.

Another example:

I like cleaning ladies.

This is violating the maxim of manner because it is ambiguous.

4. Maxim of quality

This is related to saying the truth. Do not lie or make unsupported claims.

Example:

Speaker 1: have you passed the exam?

Speaker 2: yes.

Let us say that he is lying about passing the exam. This is a violation of the maxim of quality.

Note:

In the exam, you will face practical questions about maxims. You will have a sentence, and you will choose the right maxim.

Pay attention to the verbs *obey* and *violate*. For example, if you say the truth, you are obeying the maxim of quality, and if you are lying, you are violating it.

In pragmatics, sometimes we say something, but we mean something else. We are just sending an indirect message.

E.g. *it is hot.*

Here, I could be conveying a message for you to open the window or to turn on the fan or the AC.

E.g. *can you pass me the salt?*

This does not mean that I am testing your ability of passing the salt. Here, this means that I need the salt shaker.

Also, intonation is very important in determining the meaning of the sentence. Intonation is related to pragmatics.

For example, I say to lazy students, "You are all top students." Here, I mean the opposite of what I am saying by using a certain intonation to express satire or irony.

Face Threatening Acts (FTA)

This is another theory that is not included in your book. It is related to Brown and Levinson.

Face in pragmatics is related to our prestige. We say threaten your face and save your face. Sometimes, someone might threaten your face by embarrassing you, for example.

Talking about face, we have:

- Positive face: I want the others to respect me, praise me, and appreciate me.

- Negative face: I do not want others to impose something on me.

If someone tries to impose something on me, then I say that he is threatening my negative face.

We have strategies we use to save our face. All of the strategies are related to politeness theory.

1. Off-record strategy:

E.g. *it is hot.*

It means “please open the window.” So, I am using this strategy to save your face because if I say, “Open the window,” I will be imposing something on you; therefore, I am threatening your face.

2. On-record strategy:

It is divided into:

A. On-record strategy (without redressive):

I talk to you directly and give you orders, requests, or suggestions without taking politeness into consideration. It is just about do this and do not that.

Without redressive means that I just talk in your face directly without caring or having shyness.

E.g. *open the window.*

B. On-record strategy (with redressive):

It is divided into:

- With redressive positive politeness:

It depends on the social status between the speaker and the addressee.

For example, if you are addressing your father, mother, professor, or doctor, there is here a social status, and you need to use polite and formal language when you want anything. So, you use *can, could, may, shall, should*, etc.

E.g. *I am wondering if you could open the window please.*

Threatening positive face

Let us say that I am praising someone you do not like or praising myself in front of you. Here, I am threatening your positive face. Also, if I criticize you, threaten you, blame you, or make fun of you, I will be threatening your positive face.

▪ **With redressive negative politeness:**

Here, we I do NOT concern about formality.

For example, if I have an exam tomorrow in the university, and my car is broken, I say, "Can you give me your car?"

So, here this is related to with redressive but negative because it is indirect.

Only on-record (without redressive) is direct.

The negative face is threatened when someone is imposing something on you.

In the EXAM, you will have a situation, and you will choose the strategy.

From the book, we just need chapters 4 and 5. The next meeting will be our final lecture.

That is all for today

See you next week

