

Discourse and Pragmatics

- ❖ For pragmaticians following Wittgenstein's later philosophy, saying always means doing something. This idea has been developed by the originators of speech-act theory Austin (1962[1955]) and Searle (1992[1969]), who

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- North American pragmatism has crucially influenced interactional fields of study such as qualitative micro-sociology, conversation analysis, qualitative sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, social psychology and so forth (see the section on 'Interactionism') whereas discourse pragmatics has contributed to the linguistic study of the formal repertoires and markers of 'language in use' (see e.g. deixis, presupposition, polyphony in the section on 'Enunciative Pragmatics', and communicative order, argumentation,

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Speech Acts

- There are sentences which look like statements, or as Austin prefers to call them *constatives*, that are not intended to record or impart information about facts: some, for example, like 'the King of France is bald' are strictly nonsense, despite unexceptional grammatical form; others, *ethical propositions*, are 'perhaps intended, solely or partly, to evince emotion or to prescribe conduct, or to influence it in special ways'.

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- A speaker can perform three acts simultaneously: a *locutionary* act which is the act of saying something in the full sense of 'say'; an *illocutionary* act which is an act performed *in* saying something, the act identified by the explicit performative; and a *perlocutionary* act, the act performed *by* or as a result of saying.

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Felicity conditions and discourse

- An important notion in speech act theory is the concept of *felicity conditions*. For a speech act to ‘work’, Austin argued that there are a number of conditions that must be met.

Presupposition and discourse

- A further important notion in the area of speech act theory and pragmatics is *presupposition*. Presupposition refers to the common ground that is assumed to exist between language users such as assumed

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The cooperative principle and discourse

- In his paper, 'Logic and conversation' Grice (1975) argues that in order for a person to interpret what someone else says, some kind of *cooperative principle* must be assumed to be in operation.

Turn taking

- The basic rule in English conversation is that one person speaks at a time, after which they may nominate another speaker, or another speaker may take up the turn

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Opening conversations

- One area where conversational openings have been examined in detail is in the area of telephone conversations.

Closing conversations

- Schegloff and Sacks (1973) have also looked at conversational closings. This work has since been continued by Button (1987) who in his discussion of telephone closings points out that telephone closings usually go over four turns of talk, made up of pre-

Bibliography

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