

MT III - PRAGMATICS AND DISCOURSE

INTRODUCTION

1. What is pragmatics? It is a recent discipline, in fact the first official definition about pragmatics was given in 1983 by Levinson but he was so unsure that he gave two definitions. More definitions were given later but one element that all of them have in common is that every definition thinks of language not as a code but as a means of communication and that every definition considers how extra-linguistic information influences communication. In fact, in order to communicate we don't need just a language but also their users, the context in which the communication happens, the contextual conditions governing the speaker's choice of an utterance. In other words, we can say that pragmatics studies the relation between:

- **Language:** it is used by users in communication.
- **Meaning:** it's what the speakers intend to say but also what the hearer understands. Often, the meaning is not conveyed in the best way and the literal meaning is not the implied one. What we intend to say is not what we mean (example of the window).
- **Context:** it is fundamental in communication and in pragmatics, in fact it is the one thing we can never do without. If we exclude riddles, where verbal communication implies words, we often have to go beyond words, beyond a text and we need to consider the context, what is around the text.

2. What is context? Very often to understand an utterance, we need to understand the context, which is the physical and social world in which the speech event takes place, made up of different elements such as language, non-verbal communication and all that extra-linguistic information which is not explicitly declared or implicitly entailed in the language itself, in the utterance or in the text. To understand verbal language, it is needed more than just text and linguistic elements. Language cannot exist in a void, it only exists in context. We can say that context is that dimension which turns language as a formal system into language as a means of communication. Context is the real world in which the communicative exchange takes place which provides extra-linguistic information (information which is not in the text) and which enables the participants to avoid ambiguity and decipher utterances.

There are three main reasons why context is so important. First, **it influences the way we communicate**. For example, there is a difference between how you would communicate in class and how you would communicate with your friends. Second reason, it helps reduce the potentiality of an utterance. **The potentiality of an utterance** is the effects which utterances have in isolated contexts where they can have potentially endless meanings (ex. "Door!"; if you don't know the context in which this word is used, it could have different meanings. It could mean there's a door, it could be someone's at the door, it could be that the door bell is ringing ecc.), including the opposite of what they mean (ex. "Thank you!" which is not always a way of expressing gratitude). As we will see, the concept of meaning potential is linked to the fact that an LE may express various CF. Since there is no 1:1 relationship between form and function, it is impossible to predict what CF the LE fulfills. It could potentially fulfill any communicative function, including the opposite of its surface meaning as it happens with jokes. The last reason is that context allows us to use utterances which are reduced in explicitness and understand other people's utterances. What is **"reduction in explicitness"**? When we communicate we tend to avoid being over-explicit. First because we don't have the time to waste in being longwinded and second, we do not communicate what is already known, and therefore obvious. Sometimes in an ordinary conversation, even a word, a nod or a glance are more than sufficient to express an entire message. Even where language is more explicit, as in direct speech acts (in Les where CF and GF coincide), are based on assumptions or presuppositions. We can achieve reduction in explicitness through different ways such as deixis. Reduction in explicitness helps to account for the indirectness and incompleteness of language in communication. Given the incompleteness of the message and in order to understand, especially when we are as implicit as possible, context is necessary. Interactants are forced to draw inferences and supply the missing links themselves, again showing how communication is a process of interpretation.

There are three types of different contexts which together constitute the context of communicative interactions:

1. **Situational or communicative context:** what the speakers know about what they can see around them.
2. **Background knowledge context or knowledge of the world:** what the speakers know about each other and the world.
3. **Co-textual context or co-text:** what they know about what they have been saying.

2.1 SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

It is the situation where the communicative interaction is taking place at the moment of speaking. It is the real world which is made up of different components, mainly extra-linguistic and non-verbal pressures which have an impact on communication because of the three main reasons we talked about before: they allow us to be less explicit, to reduce the potentiality of an utterance and to influence the way we communicate. The situational context is an **umbrella term** because the sum of four main context variables and a number of minor variables. They are:

- **Topic** (what?): it's the "what" of the communicative exchange. It may affect lexis, grammar and the style of the conversation. For example, legal documents, are characterized by extremely long and complex clauses, by the lack of anaphoric reference which results in an abundance of repetition. Here, the topic overlaps with the purpose of such language, which is to increase explicitness of the concepts expressed in order to decrease meaning potential, so to reduce possible interpretations. The topic of conversation not only it influences how we communicate but it also influences whether we communicate at all. In fact, there are some topics you can't talk about in certain contexts. Topics you can't talk about are called "taboo topics". Furthermore, topic reduces the potentiality of an utterance.

Ex. "This place is a greenhouse".

> the meaning of this utterance changes according to the topic. If you're talking about ecology, the speaker is literally referring to a greenhouse but they could also be referring to a hot place.

- **Settings** (when? And where?): they refer to spatiotemporal location. They include time (the "when" of the communication which could be diachronic or synchronic. The first one is about evolution in time whereas the second one refers to here and now) and place (the "where of the communication". Settings influence the concepts to be expressed and the language to be employed. There's a difference between what you would say and how you would say something according to the time and place. Or let's think about behaviors, including linguistic such as shouting, or swearing that would be socially accepted in some places but would be considered inappropriate in other places (like a church) where highly stylized language or low noise are the norms. Settings, as topic, also help understand the meaning of the conversation and reduce the potentiality of an utterance. For example:

[In church] A: may he rest in peace B: Amen!

[friends at home] A: De Niro is one of the best actors ever! B: Amen! (= "I agree with you").

Settings also allow reduction in explicitness because if you're in the place, you don't have to be explicit. For example:

A: are we going there now or later?

B: now.

- **Participants** (who?): we're talking about the "who" of the communication. It is an umbrella term because it is made of a lot of sub-variables. In fact, participants aren't just interacting with each other but they are complex identities. Every person is made of:

- Individual identity such as personality. Someone can be shy and others can be talkative.
- Social identity: differences in religion, gender, role, age, origins are highly marked linguistically to differing degrees in all cultures.
- Personal and or social relationships between the speakers.
- Presence or absence of an audience.

Participants affect what is said and how it is said, so the way we communicate. Class in British society is an example. Member of high status groups use longer sentences and more complex syntax more frequently rather than low status groups who tend to use more standard language.

They also reduce the potentiality of an utterance. See the example below:

[During a row with a friend]: you can go to hell! (it is not intended literally).

[A priest during a homily]: you can go to hell! (it is intended literally).

Finally, participants help to reduce explicitness:

"Same place, same time?" (they're friends)

"Shall we meet at 8.30 in front of the train station?" (they probably don't know each other or

they have a professional relationship but having a professional relationship doesn't mean being friends).

- **Medium** (how?): it is the last variable. First, we have to clarify a very common mistake which is to confuse medium with channel. They're not the same. The channel is the means through which we communicate such as phones, laptops. The medium is about the difference between written and oral communication. There usually some differences:
 - Written: it is a type of communication which is complex, well-organized, it has grammatical accuracy and a linear progression. Additionally, it's packed with information. Here, you use both parataxis (when sentences are linked through graphology) and hypotaxis (the use of coordinators and subordinators in sentences).
 - Spoken: it shows opposite characteristic. It's a type of communication which has a single structure, grammatical inaccuracy (we make mistakes when we speak), a disorganized structure, generalized or imprecise vocabulary (do, have, things, stuff etc). Syntax is much less structured and accurate than in written language. It contains many incomplete sentences, little subordination. Short chunks of speech are loosely held together and each chunks often adds only one piece of information. There are lot of false starts, hesitations, interruptions, repetitions. It also exists a mixture between the two. It can be written-to be-spoken as in speeches which are written before to be spoken after or spoken-to be-written as in classes where what is told is usually taken as notes.

2.2 WHAT IS A TEXT IN PRAGMATICS? It is the whole communicative interaction which can be release through different text-types. In fact, there are different text-types and their first classification was made at the beginning of the 90's when the first mobile phones were sold. They entered our society and changed our world. If before this new technology, only existed a few text-types and they used to be very basic such as assignment, novel, interview, political speech, after this, the number multiplied by one hundred with phone calls, emails, text messages, Skype calls ecc. The actual characteristics of a text will depend on the interplay of medium with other variables such as text type, purpose, channel, audience etc. In spoken language, while a casual conversation with a friend will exhibit the characteristics of spoken discourse, a conference speech delivered by a professor will tend towards the characteristics of written discourse. Within written discourse, the range of language can vary tremendously from the telegraphic style of telegrams, to the dense organization of newspaper articles.

2.3 HOW THE VARIABLES INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER

The variables which make up the situational context are called "variables" because they change and even if just one of these changes, the others inevitably change so as the whole communicative event. Furthermore, these variables never work on their own and independently.

1. Medium + text-type + purpose:

Ex. 1 A speech by the Italian president of Republic

Ex. 2 A university lecture

The medium is the same (spoken-to be written) but there are different partners and different purposes.

2. Medium + channel + participants:

Ex. 1 A phone call between friends

Ex. 2 A phone call between a student and a lecturer

The medium is the same (spoken) but there is a different channel (in the first example a mobile phone, in the second example a fixed phone) and also different participants.

2.4 BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE CONTEXT OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD (KOW)

It is everything we know and learn throughout our life. It's the knowledge we posses before any kind of communication and that is stored in our memory. It is our KOW that allows us to make sense of the people, events and things around us, that enables us to unravel the message behind ambiguous utterances and behind language, whether it is grammatically correct or not, whether it is indirect or direct. It is important because:

- It reduces in explicitness.
- It is our background and that of the people we are communicating with influence the way we communicate.
- It reduces the potentiality of an utterance.

Ex. The policeman put up his hand and stopped the car.

Our brain immediately relates the explicit information conveyed by the mini-text to its knowledge of the world and comes up with a reasonable explanation: in traffic, the policeman holds up his hand as a signal to a driver to stop.

There are two types of knowledge:

- **Encyclopedic/cultural KOW:** it is the information that has often access and can be shared between people of the same group or community. It is acquired through school, books, TV, oral conversation from peers and elders etc. In fact, members of the same group can assume mutual knowledge of everything normally known by group members. Groups with mutual knowledge vary in size. Let us take the music world as an example. People with an interest in and knowledge of African music could constitute a community of millions. But within this big group, there could be a group of people who know all about a particular sort of African music, its singers and its bands. These social groups are known as communities of practice if they have the broadly agreed common public goals, special mechanism for communication and a special lexis or vocabulary. This knowledge is culture.
- **(Inter)personal KOW:** it is the knowledge acquired through previous conversations and social activities which includes personal knowledge about interlocutor. So, it does not come from books and it is not available to anyone since possession of such information depends on personal experience. Therefore, such information unique and constantly updated.

Ex. A: the wine's finished B: you know I'm afraid of mice.

Interpersonal KOW is that the wine is stored in a cellar. It allows to be reduced in explicitness, as it accounts for the interactants' ability to impute CFs to each other's LE and to draw the correct inferences.

One further aspect needs to be examined. Since the amount of knowledge mankind has accumulated over the centuries is so vast, since people differ and since we cannot enter a person's mind, how can an interactant know exactly what knowledge the other interactants possess? Usually a communicant estimates, or at least tries to predict, what knowledge he or she shares with the participants in a specific speech events. We estimate what information other participants share and what information is needed in order to get our message across. While estimates are generally adequate, gross inaccuracies can occur. For example, if we overestimate the knowledge other people possess, hearers could find it difficult to understand us. So, my estimate could be wrong and could therefore lead to a breakdown in communication. In face-to-face oral communication, estimating shared information is facilitated by the feedback provided by the hearer which helps the speaker to realize immediately when his estimate has gone away, thus offering him the opportunity to instantly adjust his original estimate.

2.5 CO-TEXT

It is the context of the text itself. It means that since we consider the text as the whole communicative interaction, we can't communicate unless we know what has been said before and after that utterance. It is represented by all that verbal communication. If the other two types of contexts are made of extra-linguistic information, this is just made of linguistic information, so words, phrases, utterances ecc. The co-text constrains the meaning of the text of which it is the co-text by helping to reduce the meaning potential of an utterance. The more co-text we add, the more we reduce the meaning potential.

Ex. A: telephone!

> It could mean that there is a phone, it could mean that the telephone is ringing. We don't exactly know until we have enough contextual information. But if we add more co-text:

A: telephone!

B: I'm in the bath!

A: ok!

3. SO... Whenever we communicate, we need to consider the context because it is a dimension which turns language as a formal system into a means of communication. Also, each interaction needs to be considered individually.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (written communication)

1. COHESION VS. COHERENCE

What is coherence? A text needs to be coherent. This means it needs to show a unity of meaning, thematic and logical progression. So, a text needs to be unified and progressive. It is important to remember that to be coherent doesn't mean to be meaningful.

What is cohesion? Studies on cohesion were started by professors Halliday and Hasan in 1976 in their book "Cohesion in English". Here, they define cohesion as a "language making links with itself". Cohesion makes the grammatical (syntactical) and lexical (semantic) relationships between sentences in a text explicit. It is the grammatical and lexical unity of the text. It's the use of words to create a structural unity in a written text (such as conjunctions), the way the text makes links with and within itself. In other words, cohesion is how the co-text hangs together. Cohesion is linked with the co-text because the co-text, as we've already seen, is the only type of context made only of words. So you can't have one without the other.

Ex. A: Can you go to London tomorrow?

B: Alitalia pilots are on strike.

> No cohesive links.

Ex: A: Can you go to London tomorrow?

B: yes, I can.

> Cohesive links (ellipsis).

Cohesive devices are language items which refer to other language items in the text; they help create the structural unity of the text itself. We can divide them in two broad categories:

1. Grammatical cohesive devices: they are cohesive devices which can make the grammatical relationships between sentences explicit. They include reference, ellipsis, substitution and conjunction.
2. Lexical cohesive devices: the use of lexical open categories (nouns, lexical verbs, adjectives and adverbs) to hold a text together. They include repetition and lexical reiteration.

2. GRAMMATICAL COHESIVE DEVICES

2.1 REFERENCE. It is the use of words to indicate entities in the context. Reference is an act in which a speaker uses linguistic forms, known as **referring expressions**, to enable the hearer to identify the entity being referred to, which is known as **referent**. We use reference to avoid unnecessary repetition that would make the text over-explicit, thereby impacting with the understanding of the text, with the whole communication process because the hearer would only focus on the repetitions, disregarding the rest of the text. Furthermore, we have to remember that human communication is based on reduction in explicitness and cohesive devices are another example of linguistic elements that can be used to achieve reduction in explicitness. When a referring expression links with another referring expression within the co-text, we say that it is cohesive with the previous mention of the referent in the text.

Ex. I went with Francesca and David > The first singular personal pronoun is a referring expression which refers to the person speaking, who is the referent. At the same time, Francesca and David are also referring expressions that refer to the two people whose names are Francesca and David, the latter being the referents.

There are two types of reference:

1. **Exophoric reference**: when words are used to refer to something external.

Ex. Elisabetta is a lecturer of English Linguistics. (but who is Elisabetta?)

Exophoric reference can be distinguished in two types:

- When we mention something for the first time in a text.

Ex. Tom is studying so hard at the moment because he has to take his finals in a week's time. In this example, "Tom" is the exophoric reference in the main clause whereas "he" is the endophoric reference in the subordinate clause which refers to Tom.

- When a referring item refers to entities in the KOW, whether cultural or interpersonal, because it has previously been mentioned, it is called "**intertextuality**". It happens we have an interaction between two different types of texts (they can be different genres, they can belong to different periods etc). Intertextuality is more often interpersonal than cultural, since it usually refers to

knowledge gained in previous conversations between speakers.

Ex 1. A: What happened here? Looks like the second World War broke out in this apartment!

> In this sentence, the speaker is making a reference to something that belongs to an encyclopedic KOW.

Ex 2. A: OMG! What Sara told him yesterday was amazing!

B: you bet it was!

> Intertextuality.

2. **Endophoric reference**: words used to refer to something within the text.

Ex. Jack and Sandra will get married soon. They met at university.

In this example, “They” is the endophoric reference because it refers to “Jack and Sandra”, an element which is already in the text.

Again, endophoric reference can be distinguished in two types:

- **Anaphora**: anaphoric reference links to left dislocation, a marked structure used to link back to a referent that has been previously mentioned in the same text to emphasize it. Not only left dislocation, but also others marked structures do not respect the syntactic pattern of English language (SVO). If a referring expression is an endophoric reference and refers to something within the text that precedes, that referent is called anaphora.

Ex. My neighbors, they moved.

In this example, “they” is the anaphoric reference which refers to “my neighbors”.

Ex. Jack and Sandra will get married soon. They met at university. (= anaphora)

- **Cataphora**: cataphoric reference is linked to right dislocation, a marked structure used to link forward to a referent that hasn’t been mentioned yet. If a referring expression is an endophoric reference and refers to something within the text that will follow, that referent is called cataphora.

Ex. They moved, my neighbors.

Ex. Millions of copies of his novels have been sold. Dan Brown is one of the most famous writers of the year. (= cataphora)

There is another type of reference which is called **“associative reference”**. While notions of cataphora and anaphora are shared, this one comes by studying written texts, so from discourse analysis. It is called associative because it is literally endophora by association, meaning that there is no directly syntactic link between nouns and pronouns. The noun phrases (nouns or pronouns) are not linked explicitly to each other, but one noun phrase is linked to entities simply associated with the other noun phrase. One NP is associated with the entities associated with the other NP and impacts on its meaning. An example of associative reference is the presuppositional pool, when we have a group of entities that we can presuppose before using a certain word. Every word has a **presuppositional pool**, a number of words that can be associated to that word by logic. There are words which are more linked (ex. If I say classroom, I think about desks, chairs, whiteboard etc.) and words which are less linked (ex. If I say classroom, I don’t think immediately about teacher because the teacher is not necessarily linked to the classroom but to the class). Associative endophora is half way between endophora and exophora because it depends partly on knowledge of what went before or after within the same text, and partly on background knowledge of the cultural or interpersonal context.

Ex. Youtube is a very popular video sharing website (NP) where users can view, upload and share video clips (NP). “Video sharing” and “website” are two words belonging to an open category. If we think about video-sharing there are mainly two ways it can happen: either it’s physical sharing of DVDs or it’s an online sharing. If we associate “video sharing” with “website”, we erase the first possibility.

2.2 SUBSTITUTION. It is another grammatical device. It’s the use of substitute forms (such as one, so, auxiliary verbs) to substitute chunks of text to avoid unnecessary repetitions, to hold the text together and to achieve reduction in explicitness.

A: I have an Iphone.

B: I don’t have one but I wish I did.

> Instead of “I don’t have an iPhone but I wish I had an iPhone”.

2.3 ELLIPSIS. It is the deletion of certain chunks of the text that are unnecessary and that would influence negatively the understatement.

Ex. Sue washed the dishes and cooked dinner.

> Instead of Sue washed the dishes and Sue cooked dinner. The subject is not necessary.

2.4 CONJUNCTION. It is the use of coordinators to create cohesion, to hold the text together from a grammatical point of view, to distribute a piece of information in a clever way. Usually, the main clause contains an important piece of information and the subordinating clause, which syntactically depends on the main clause, contains a less important piece of information.

3. DEIXIS

Deixis is the use of words that link something in the external world, usually in a situational context, which is very close to exophoric reference. Deixis is indeed exophoric because it is the use of words directly linking which allows speakers to be reduced in explicitness. There are a number of categories in which we can group deictic words which we use to refer to the external world. There are three main types:

1. **Person deixis:** the use of personal pronouns to refer to people or animals in a situational context. It involves the first person (speaker), the second person (hearer) and the third person (other significant participants). In many languages, the use of pronouns encodes social deixis.

Ex. "Look at him! He's all dressed up".

A couple of remarks are worth making on the use of personal pronouns. The use of the third person singular encodes gender (he/she) and that plural forms of personal pronouns can be used in two ways, either representative or in their true use. Representative use is the use of first personal plural "we" to refer to a plurality of people, even if there is only one person. In this case, the speaker represents the group to which he refers. True use, on the other hand, is the use of third person plural "they" to designate a plurality of present referents.

2. **Place/spatial deixis:** the use of words, such as locative adverbs here/there, and determiners such as this/that, to point to a location in the situational context where an entity is.

Ex. "The glasses are there, can you take them please?"

In English there are two types of spatial deixis: proximal (the use of words which imply vicinity to the speaker, called deictic focus, such as "this", "here") and distal (the use of words which imply being far away from the deictic focus, such as "that", "there"). Other languages, as for Spanish, have a three-type spatial deictic-system which don't depend on distance of the entity but on the person. Furthermore, it is important to remember that the relative closeness or distance is contextually determined and "here" could be meaningless unless the hearer locates the dividing line between here and there.

3. **Time/temporal deixis:** the use of adverbs such as "now, later" etc. in a situational context to locate points or intervals on the time axis, using the moment of utterance as a reference point. There are thus three main divisions of the time axis: before the moment of utterance, at the time of utterance, after the time of utterance.

Ex. "I'll see you in 5 minutes".

The most basic temporal deictics in English are now and then. The former is closer to the present moment of the utterance, the latter points far away from the present. Temporal deixis depends heavily on calendric notions, as to say both clock and calendar. In English, with the exception of tonight, only the 24-hour period has lexicalized deictics (today, yesterday, tomorrow). For references to other periods, we must use expressions containing this, last and next.

There are other categories which derive from the 3 main ones:

- Discourse deixis: the use of this/that to refer to other parts of the co-text. "This" refers to future parts of the co-text, "that" to a preceding discourse elements.

Ex. "That was not a nice thing to say, you know?"

At the same time, the "hereby" of an explicit performative sentence could be said to point to current discourse as in "I hereby declare you husband and wife". Also, some sentence adverbs such as "therefore" and "furthermore", include an element of discourse deixis in their meaning. Discourse deixis is linked to anaphora.

- Psychological use of spatial deixis: spatial deixis can sometimes be used to refer to an abstract space. Ex. What do you think of this idea of mine? Ideas do not literally occupy space but it is easy to think of them as if they did. Another use of spatial deixis is to signal emotive distancing or closeness. If we're talking about something we feel psychologically or emotionally close to,

we use proximal deixis (this/these). If we feel psychologically far away from something, we use distal deixis (that/those).

Ex. This beautiful city of yours.

Ex. I can't stand that woman.

- Gestural deixis: sometimes in the situational context, the use of body gestures are necessary to understand what was said. This type of deixis needs the interpretation of the hearer who needs to see the speaker and their gestures.

Ex. "I need three volunteers: you, you and you."

- Symbolic deixis: the use of spacial deixis, mainly proximal deixis, to underline the symbolic value of something over a long period of time.

Ex. "Isn't this weather gorgeous?". "This" is used to underline symbolically the attachment to something.

4. LEXICAL COHESIVE DEVICES

4.1 REPETITION. It is a lexical cohesive device through which words or phrases are repeated throughout the text, becoming a thread. Sometimes repetition is necessary for communicative purposes or for cohesion. When used as a cohesive device, it is usually linked to some rhetorical effect. While other cohesive devices are only used to create cohesion, repetition is also used to create some special effect. For example, "Yes, we can" by Barack Obama has a cohesive and communicative purpose.

4.2 LEXICAL REITERATION. To "reiterate" something means to refer to a lexeme using slightly different words. It is deployed to avoid unnecessary repetitions while giving the same amount of information. It comprises:

- Use of synonyms, antonyms, hypernyms, hyponyms, general words.
- Synonyms: words with similar meaning (person = individual)
- Antonyms: words with opposite meaning. There are two types of antonyms, those which have the same exact opposite meaning (live/dead) and they are called "relational or ungradable" and those called "gradables" which don't have the exact opposite meaning (small/big). Ungradable antonyms identify a dichotomy with a referent possessing either one or other of the polar characteristics, for example "female/male". On the other hand, gradables are more a matter of degree "excellent, good, average/fair, bad, awful". The relativity of lexical items is attributable to personal and social differences, it depends on the connotational meaning of a lexeme (see below).
- Hypernyms: words with a very general meaning (ex. body) which include specific words called hyponyms (ex. hand, head etc.)
- General words: they can be general nouns (such as "thing", "stuff", "place) or general verbs ("do", "happen" etc). The main difference between general words and umbrella terms is that the latter can cover almost everything whereas general words cannot.

5. SO...

Although cohesion is used mainly to hold a text together, it varies from text to text. Certain text types tend to use certain cohesive devices as a part of their terminology. For example, legal documents tend to use more repetitions, literary texts tend to use ellipsis to cause ambiguity, essays by students tend to use conjunctions to assign the text a clear structure and to show that the world of linking words has been mastered.

6. DIMENSION OF LEXICAL/LITERAL MEANING

A further element which makes communication a complex procedure and accounts for the strong explicit link between co-text and context is that very lexical meaning of items that can be usually negotiated in contexts. We've seen that there are different types of meanings, including lexical meaning which is generally the meaning of a word you can look up in the dictionary. There are five dimensions of lexical meaning (= umbrella term):

1. Denotation: it is the first dimension, the one we can loosely use a synonym for literal meaning (also known as sense, descriptive meaning, propositional meaning, cognitive meaning etc.). It allows that element to stand for people, animals, objects, actions, processes, states of affairs existing in the real world. It is the all different shades of meaning a word has which are written in a dictionary. But, just like utterances in communication have a meaning potential, same goes for words which usually denote more than one meaning (that you can understand from the context). In fact, words are **polysemous** (they can have more than one meaning; it's all the

meanings a word has within the same class ex. floor, it could stand for flat surface on which people stand, to a level in a building, to the bed of an ocean etc. BUT it's always a noun!) and they can have **multiple membership**, so they function equally in more than one word class, in other words they can belong to more than category/word class (ex. chair; it can be both a noun and a verb). The denotational meaning of a lexeme brings out some points. For example, the precise confines of some lexical items may have demarcated boundaries ("child" may refer to a young human male or female or it could be the antonym of parent) whereas other boundaries may be blurred, indeterminate, an entity belonging to a category may exhibit the characteristics of a given category to differing degrees. This last aspect is captured by the concept of the gradability of antonyms.

2. Connotation: it is the second dimension. It is the extra meaning a word acquires by virtue of the extension of its denotational meaning, by making cultural, social, emotive, attitudinal associations. Certain words have no connotation at all but just a denotative meaning (ex. table). These are said to be "value free words". All the other words have a connotation towards which we have either a positive or a negative reaction. Some words are positively connoted (ex. kittens), other are negatively connoted (grey day). These are said to be "value loaded words".

Ex. Grey day = sad day. The denotational meaning of grey is "a dark color" but it has a negative connotation, it is associated with sadness. The denotational meaning of day is "unit of measurement of time" and it has no connotational meaning. Furthermore, connotational meaning is strongly culture-bound:

Ex. Black = associated with death in Western Culture.

White = associated with death in Aboriginal culture.

3. Collocation: lexical items are not free to be arranged syntadgmatically with other lexemes but they are placed, or collocated, in meaningful relationships with a restricted number of other lexical items, with which they frequently co-occur because they fall within a congruous semantic field. Words have, in fact, a collocational pattern studied by corpus linguists who used softwares to analyze words in text. Words occurring in real life are stored in digital databases which contain millions of words. Corpora consist both of written texts and oral texts and it has been collected from English-speaking countries from the late 1980s onwards. The largest corpus have hundreds of millions of words. Doing this, they realized that some words tend to appear very often in combination with other words but are not free to combine with whichever words. Every word has a collocational range, a group of words that it combines with: ex. Do business, make a decision, take an exam etc. Furthermore, words that are synonyms don't necessarily have the same collocation pattern. For example even though beautiful and handsome recall beauty, they can't be collocated with all nouns which may be assigned the value of beauty. "Beautiful" may be employed to qualify a woman but not a man. If a male is to be attributed the quality of beauty, the right collocation pattern is "handsome man". If the collocational pattern is broken by the speaker, one possible assumption is that the speaker is presumed homosexual. This is really important because it means that the collocational meaning of a lexeme is not directly derivable from the denotational meaning of a word. Collocates are dependent on linguistic and cultural context of use. However, it should be noted that a collocational combination is not a fixed expression as in idiomatic expressions (see below). There is just a strong statistical expectancy that the target lexemes will co-occur.
4. Idiomatic expressions: idioms are fixed expressions which exploit the connotations of an item, hence they need to be culturally contextualized to be fully understood. They have an intended meaning only if words are in that order.
Ex: She's a pearl of a child.
5. Semantic field: words can be grouped together in a written or oral text based on the denotational and connotational meaning they hold in common. These shared meanings can be conveyed through synonyms, antonyms and hyponyms. The same item can belong to more than one semantic field but the context or co-text will clarify which specific meaning and semantic field we are to infer.
Ex. A: "It's going to be a very elegant party. What should I wear?" B: "Wear black"
> This doesn't mean the color black carries out only connotation of elegance. It does so in this context but placed in another context, it could acquire another overtone, as in funerals.

7. VALUE-FREE VS VALUE-LOADED WORDS

Co-text and semantic field typically contribute to turning value-free words (words which do not pass judgements) into value-loaded words (words which pass judgements) and/or positively

connote words into negatively connoted words and vice-versa. Value-free words are words which provide an objective and neutral description of their referent without passing any judgement on it. Value-loaded words when used in the context of everyday life they don't exclusively refer to an object or action but they normally express a person's judgement on what is being described. However, connotation is not fixed because according to the co-text we put words in and according to the semantic field and connotation can change.

Ex: scene from "V for Vendetta": some words such as report or message have a neutral connotation but if they are put in a co-text, in this case the movie, they become negative. In fact, these words have a different connotation from when they're de-contextualized. So, the moment you put an element in a co-text, you can change its meaning from value loaded to value-free or vice-versa. However, this is not only due to co-text, mainly that we put words in another context and they switch their meaning. Indeed, for the large part it is due to the semantic field. Here, the semantic field is violence, in fact there are a lot of words which recall violence such as terrorist, hate, attack, shot etc. Furthermore, if we pay attention there is a counterpart in this scene: on one hand the authorities (plan, scheduled approach etc.), on the other hand the terrorists (many words are related to this counterpart such as terrorist, attack, weapon, shot, hate etc.; they're all linked to the other side of the coin). There's an opposition of the good and the bad but it is never explicitly said who's the good guys and who's the bad guys, yet at the end of the text you know that the authorities are the good guys and the terrorist are the bad guys but if you have watched the movie you know that it's not like this. The moment you put an element in a wider context, you can switch its connotation grammatically and this is a very powerful way to create extra-meaning.

7.2 ASSOCIATIVE ENDOPHORA & VALUE-LOADED WORDS

We have seen that words can be directly and syntactically linked with each other or they can be influenced by association. Same goes for phrases, in fact one phrase can influence on the presuppositional pool of the other. For, example "war" is one of those words whose presuppositional pool is extremely vast, for example "bomb, tank, challenge, helicopter, fight", including words which no longer apply to the modern notion of war such as "sword, knight etc." But if in a same co-text, I put the word "war" and the phrase "in Vietnam", automatically knight and sword disappear and if in the same co-text I put the word "war" and Abraham Lincoln, machine guns and tank automatically disappear. Another example is the phrase "War on fat" used to refer to obesity in USA. Here, what remains of the huge presuppositional pool is fight/challenge/hardship.