De l'interface sémantiquepragmatique: le sens modal en contexte

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Le possible et le nécessaire – Domaines conceptuels et expressions de la modalité – En l'honneur de Paul Larreya

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Outline

- Meaning in context
 - linguistic and extra-linguistic environment
- Contextual meaning
 - semantic and pragmatic
- Modal meaning
 - Context-independent semantics
 - Context-dependent semantics
 - Context-dependent pragmatics





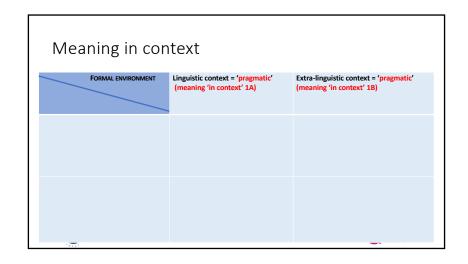
Meaning in context vs. Contextual meaning

Meaning in context

- \bullet The meaning of an utterance is determined in context
 - ?
- Meaning in context = pragmatics
- 'In context' = FORMAL PERSPECTIVE = contexts of use
 - a) Linguistic context
 - b) Extra-linguistic context





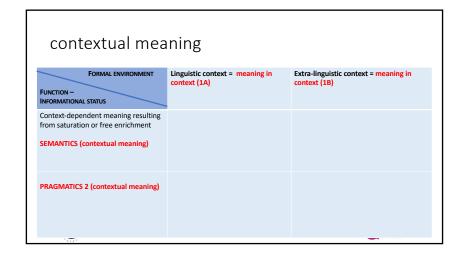


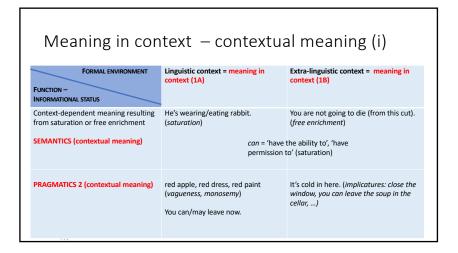
Contextual meaning

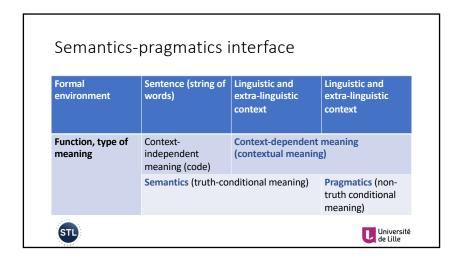
- 'Contextual' = TYPE OF MEANING
 - a) In-context-determined facets of truth-conditional meaning: context-dependent **semantics**
 - b) In-context-determined facets of non-truth-conditional meaning: **pragmatic** meaning (Implicated propositions and other **pragmatic** meaning effects)











Summing up. Terminological clarification

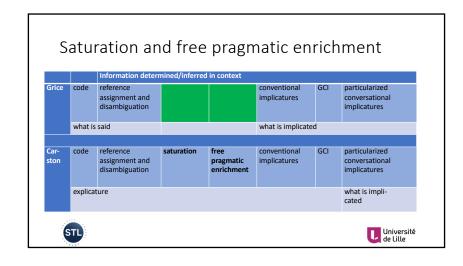
- 1. Meaning in context: "formal" category
 - a. Linguistic context
 - b. Extra-linguistic context
- 2. Contextual meaning: "functional" category
 - a. (context-dependent) semantics (truth conditional meaning)
 - b. Pragmatics (implicated propositions; meaning effects that do not contribute to truth-conditional content)







FORMAL ENVIRONMENT FUNCTION — INFORMATIONAL STATUS	Linguistic context = meaning in context	Extra-linguistic context = meaning in context
Context-dependent meaning resulting from lexically regulated saturation SEMANTICS (contextual meaning)	You <i>can</i> go to the party tonight. (unmarked interpretation: permission) She <i>can</i> speak Russian. (ability) You <i>can</i> speak Russian. (permission)	Jennifer can swim. (a) Proud parent returning home from swimming lessons (ability) (b) Parent reporting on a medical visit (permission) Jennifer can speak Russian. (a) Teacher (absolute beginners can use mother tongue) (permission) (b) Host welcoming Russian guest at a reception (ability)
PRAGMATICS (contextual meaning)	Can birds fly? How can you say such a thing? You can/may go to the party tonight. Inner ear infections may/can cause dizziness You may want to try this.	She can't lift her right arm. (implicatures) (a) nurse at staff meeting (b) Jennifer informing her brother about their mother's condition



Saturation

- Bottom-up process
- Linguistically mandated: 'involves finding the intended content (or value) for a linguistically indicated variable or slot' (Carston 2009: 49)
- Obligatory: proposition communicated is incomplete without the contextual specification of the variable
- 1) Sarah's book is interesting
- 2) Mary's book is better. (than what?)
- 3) Mary finished the book. (reading, editing, ...?) (Bach 1994: 285)





Free pragmatic enrichment

- Top-down process; free (optional)
- 4) You are not going to die, Peter. (from this cut) (Bach 1994: 267)
- 5) Jean went to Austria last week and she ran into John [in Austria]. (unarticulated constituents)
- 6) Peter *drank* too much [alcohol] at the party. (specifization, sense narrowing, ad hoc concepts)
- 7) The ATM swallowed my credit card. (sense extension, loosening or broadening)
- 8) The ham sandwich left without paying. (semantic transfer)





Contextual meaning: semantics (i)

- Semantic underdetermination: semantic template that needs to be contextually filled in
- Saturation with open-ended valuation vs.
- large, essentially open class of possible contextual resolutions
- Saturation with lexically regulated valuation
 - limited (and small) class of discrete options, which are specified by the lexical meaning (possibility or necessity) of the modal
- Contributes to the truth-conditional content

(Depraetere 2014, Depraetere & Salkie 2017)





Contextual meaning: semantics (ii)

- 9) Sheila can go to the party. (permission)
- 10) Sheila can speak Russian. (ability)
- 11) You can speak Russian. (permission)
- 12) Jennifer can swim. (ability or permission)
- 13) Jennifer can speak Russian. (ability or permission)
- → Linguistic (9-11) and extra-linguistic context (12-13)
- → Contextual meaning: context-determined semantics





Contextual meaning: pragmatics (i)

- Implicated propositions (conventional)
- 14) Can birds fly? (the answer to the question you've asked is obvious)
- 15) How can you say such a thing? (I see no reason to say this, don't say this, you shouldn't be saying this, it's morally wrong, ...)





Contextual meaning: pragmatics (ii)

- Power relations
 - 16) You can/may go to the party tonight.
- Stylistic effects
 - 17) Inner ear infections *may/can* cause dizziness
- Pragmatic strengthening
 - 18) You may want to consider this.





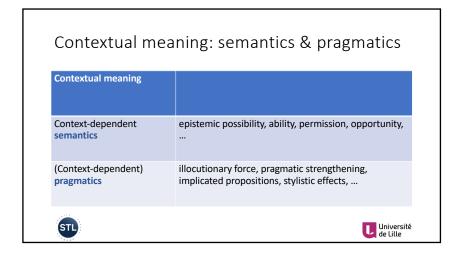
Contextual meaning: pragmatics (iii)

- Illocutionary force: indirect speech acts
 - 19) Can you pass me the salt?
 - 20) Can you wash those few cups up?
- Implicated propositions
 - 21) She can't lift her arm.
- → Linguistic and extra-linguistic context
- → Contextual meaning: context-determined pragmatics





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• Thank you!

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