

## De l'interface sémantique-pragmatique: le sens modal en contexte

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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*

- 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





### Meaning in context

FORMAL ENVIRONMENT	Linguistic context = 'pragmatic' (meaning 'in context' 1A)	Extra-linguistic context = 'pragmatic' (meaning 'in context' 1B)

### Contextual meaning

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

### contextual meaning

FORMAL ENVIRONMENT	Linguistic context = meaning in context (1A)	Extra-linguistic context = meaning in context (1B)
<b>FUNCTION – INFORMATIONAL STATUS</b> Context-dependent meaning resulting from saturation or free enrichment <b>SEMANTICS (contextual meaning)</b>		
<b>PRAGMATICS 2 (contextual meaning)</b>		

### Meaning in context – contextual meaning (i)

FORMAL ENVIRONMENT	Linguistic context = meaning in context (1A)	Extra-linguistic context = meaning in context (1B)
<b>FUNCTION – INFORMATIONAL STATUS</b> Context-dependent meaning resulting from saturation or free enrichment <b>SEMANTICS (contextual meaning)</b>	He's wearing/eating rabbit. (saturation)  can = 'have the ability to', 'have permission to' (saturation)	You are not going to die (from this cut). (free enrichment)
<b>PRAGMATICS 2 (contextual meaning)</b>	red apple, red dress, red paint (vagueness, monosemy)  You can/may leave now.	It's cold in here. (implicatures: close the window, you can leave the soup in the cellar, ...)

## Semantics-pragmatics interface

Formal environment	Sentence (string of words)	Linguistic and extra-linguistic context	Linguistic and extra-linguistic context
Function, type of meaning	Context-independent meaning (code)	Context-dependent meaning (contextual meaning)	
	Semantics (truth-conditional meaning)	Pragmatics (non-truth conditional meaning)	



## 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)



## Modals

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

## Saturation and free pragmatic enrichment

Information determined/inferred in context							
Grice	code	reference assignment and disambiguation			conventional implicatures	GCI	particularized conversational implicatures
	what is said					what is implicated	
Carston	code	reference assignment and disambiguation	saturation	free pragmatic enrichment	conventional implicatures	GCI	particularized conversational implicatures
	explicature						what is implicated



## 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. (specification, 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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## Contextual meaning: semantics & pragmatics

Contextual meaning	
Context-dependent semantics	epistemic possibility, ability, permission, opportunity, ...
(Context-dependent) pragmatics	illocutionary force, pragmatic strengthening, implicated propositions, stylistic effects, ...



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