



DBB 408 TRANSLATION STUDIES IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

1

Pragmatic Equivalence

- ▶ Here, we will be concerned with the way utterances are used in communicative situations and the way we interpret them in context. This is a highly complex but fascinating area of language study, known as **pragmatics**.
- ▶ **Pragmatics** is the study of language in use. It is the study of meaning, not as generated by the linguistic system but as conveyed and manipulated by participants in a communicative situation.
- ▶ **Coherence** and **implicature** are important concepts in pragmatics.

1. Coherence

- ▶ Like cohesion, **coherence** is a network of relations which organize and create a text: **cohesion** is the network of surface relations which link words and expressions to other words and expressions in a text, and **coherence** is the network of conceptual relations which underlie the surface text.
- ▶ In the case of **cohesion**, stretches of language are connected to each other by virtue of lexical and grammatical dependencies.
- ▶ In the case of **coherence**, they are connected by virtue of conceptual or meaning dependencies as perceived by language users.

- ▶ For instance, a conjunction such as **therefore** may express a conceptual notion of reason or consequence. However, if the reader cannot perceive an underlying semantic relation of reason or consequence between the propositions connected by **therefore**, s/he will not be able to make sense of the text in question; in other words, the text will not '**cohere**' for this particular reader.

Cohesion: examples

- Ali **Leyla'ya** yalan söylediđi için kızdı. **Onun** böyle bir şey yapmasını beklemiyordu. (artgönderim)
- Bir süre **İstanbul'** da kaldım, **oradan** Ankara'ya geldim. (artgönderim)
- **Onun** haklı olduğunu biliyordum, dinlemeliydim **Ahmet** beyi. (öngönderim)
- Ödevini kabul ederim, **ama** bir daha geciktirmeyeceksin.
- A: Dişlerini fırçaladın mı? (eksilti)
- B: Evet.
- Ödevimi yapmalıyım, **çünkü** yarın son gün.

Coherence: examples

- “(...) Artık kışlar eskisi gibi soğuk geçmiyor. Bilim insanları küresel ısınmanın birçok olumsuz etkisi olduğunu söylüyorlar. Okyanuslardaki adalar birkaç yıla kadar sular altında kalacakmış.”
- “**İlk önce** iki bardak unu bir kaba döküceksin. **Sonra** televizyonu kapatacaksın, başka bir deyişle, perdeleri açacaksın. Ekrandan uzaklaşacaksın; **daha sonra**, kaba iki yumurta kıracaksın (...)”

- ▶ The **coherence of a text** is a result of the interaction between knowledge presented in the text and the reader's own knowledge and experience of the world, the latter being influenced by a variety of factors such as **age, sex, race, nationality, education, occupation, and political and religious affiliations**.
- ▶ Different societies, and indeed different individuals and groups of individuals within the same society, have different experiences of the world and different views on the way events and situations are organized or related to each other.
- ▶ A text which coheres for one reader may therefore not cohere for another.

- In the **final analysis**, a reader can only make sense of a text by analysing the linguistic elements which constitute it against the backdrop of his/her own knowledge and experience.
- A **translator** has to take account of the range of knowledge available to his/her target readers and of the expectations they are likely to have about such things as the **organization of the world**, the organization of language in general, the organization and **conventions of particular text types**, the structure of **social relations**, and the **appropriateness or inappropriateness of certain kinds of linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour**, among other things.
- These are all the factors which affect the coherence of a text in varying degrees because, as human beings, we can only make sense of new information in terms of our own knowledge, beliefs, and previous experience of both linguistic and non-linguistic events.

Coherence and implicature

- ▶ **Example:** I went to the cinema. The beer was good.
- ▶ Anyone who hears or reads it will reach the following interpretation:

The speaker says that s/he went to the cinema, that s/he drank beer at the cinema, and that the beer was good.
- ▶ There is nothing in the above utterance which tells us explicitly that the speaker drank the beer or that s/he did so at the cinema. This is a perfectly **coherent**, if decontextualized, piece of language.

- ▶ Grice (1975) uses the term **implicature** to refer to what the speaker means or implies rather than what s/he literally says.
- ▶ **Example:**
A: Shall we go for a walk?
B: It's raining.
- ▶ Why do we assume that **'It's raining'** is meant as an answer to the above question? One answer which has already been suggested is that we do it in order to maintain the assumption of coherence.
- ▶ If we do accept it as an answer, **how do we know how to interpret it?**

- ▶ Does it mean
- ▶ 'No, we'd better not because it's raining',
- ▶ 'OK, but we'd better take an umbrella', or
- ▶ 'Yes – we both like walking in the rain'?

- ▶ **Grice** suggests that **discourse has certain important features**: for instance, it is **connected** (i.e. it does not consist of unrelated sequences); it has a **purpose**; and it is a **co-operative effort**. These features give rise to a general principle of communication, the **Co-operative Principle**, which participants are expected to observe.

Conversational Maxims according to Grice's Theory

► 1. Quantity

(a.) Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).

(b.) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2. Quality

'Try to make your contribution one that is true', specifically:

(a.) Do not say what you believe to be false.

(b.) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

3. Relevance

Make your contributions relevant to the current exchange.

4. Manner

Be perspicuous, specifically:

(a.) Avoid obscurity of expression.

(b.) Avoid ambiguity.

(c.) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).

(d.) Be orderly.

Breaking the maxim of quantity

Example from a transcript

In this exchange, 'A' dominates and does not allow 'B' to participate much. 'A' is breaking Grice's maxim of quantity and does not listen to 'B' who could decide that this was not an enjoyable conversation.

- A:** yeah (.) anyway (.) anyway (.) so so I said so I said (.) I didn't sort of say anything I just sort of said this and er (.) I said I can see
- B:** she wants to
- A:** no no (.) I said I can see that there's erm a sort of er balancing act (.) in the sense that when I started you could either do it or you couldn't and if you couldn't you still got the job (.) but I thought it was a shame but she said she thought it was necessary
- B:** oh it's
- A:** and then and then she she immediately started talking about how the best person she'd known was one they all hated ...

Breaking the maxim of quantity

- ▶ **Example 1:**

- ▶ – George Costanza's message on his answering machine: Believe it or not, George isn't at home. Please leave a message after the beep. I must be out or I'd pick up the phone. Where could I be? Believe it or not, I'm not at home.

- ▶ **Example 2:** Nicole (friend visiting): Where is the nearest gas station?

- ▶ Me: up the street

- ▶ **Example 3:**

- ▶ A colleague asks, How is the job search going? and I respond: Sorry, that's confidential.

- ▶ **Example 4:**

- ▶ A: "Are you going to work tomorrow?"
B: "I am on jury duty, but I'll have to go to the doctor in the evening. I have asked the manager for permission"

Breaking the maxim of quality

► **Example 1 (irony):**

A: John just failed another test.

B: Boy, that guy's a real genius!

► **Example 2:**

On Christmas, an ambulance picks up a collapsed drunkard who collapsed on the sidewalk. Soon the drunkard vomits all over the paramedic.

The paramedic says: – 'Great, that's really great! That's made my Christmas!'

Breaking the maxim of relevance

- **Example 1:**

- – Father to daughter at family dinner: Any news about the exam results?
- – Daughter: Ice-cream anyone?

- **Example 2:**

- Daughter: How long until the picnic?
- Mom : It's clean up time now.

- **Example 3:**

- A: What on earth has happened to the roast beef?
- B: The dog is looking very happy.

Breaking the maxim of manner

► **Example 1:**

- Interviewer: Did the Government promise teachers a raise and did not start any legal procedures about it?
- Spokesperson: I would not try to steer you away from that conclusion.

► **Example 2:**

- Me: When are you going to finish this kitchen project that was started a year ago?
- Husband: When someone is done taking classes, since projects have been put on hold for that.

► **Example 3:**

- A: What are you baking?
- B: Be I are tea aitch dee ay wye see ay kay ee.