

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE AND ITS USE

Layers of meaning: An introduction

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DIFFERENT LAYERS OF MEANING

Not all meaning is alike, there is semantic meaning and pragmatic meaning:

(1) A Are you going jogging?

B₁ I have a terrible headache.

(i) 'B has a terrible headache.'

SEMANTIC

(ii) 'B isn't going jogging.'

PRAGMATIC

These do not have the same status, as the negation of the semantic meaning leads to a **contradiction**, while the negation of the pragmatic meaning leads to **cancellation** of that meaning:

(2) B₂ But I'm painfree.

CONTRADICTION OF B₁

B₃ But I'm going anyways.

CANCELLATION OF B₁

→ IMPLICATURES

DIFFERENT LAYERS OF MEANING

Meanings that are taken for granted:

- (3) a. Dave started to eat meat.
 - (i) → It is taken for granted that Dave didn't eat meat before.
 - (ii) → It is taken for granted that the meat is cooked, baked, etc.

- b. Dave liked to eat meat.
 - (i) → It is taken for granted that Dave didn't eat meat before.
 - (ii) → It is taken for granted that the meat is cooked, baked, etc.

→ PRESUPPOSITIONS

DIFFERENT LAYERS OF MEANINGS: AN OVERVIEW

TIME



old information



pragmatic presuppositions
semantic presuppositions



non-cancellable

new information



assertion
conventional implicatures
conversational implicatures



cancellable

ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

- What other kinds of meaning are there?
 - Assertion vs. presupposition
 - Semantics vs. pragmatic presuppositions
 - Conversational vs. conventional implicatures
- How do meanings arise and what properties do they have?
 - Triggered vs. untriggered
 - Cancellability
- Psycholinguistic evidence for the semantics–pragmatics distinction
 - Implicatures take time to arise
- Pragmatics and humor