

# UNDERSTANDING MEANING IN SPEAKING AND WRITING

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# INTRODUCTION

- ◉ there is often a big difference *between what people say and what people mean.*
- ◉ Meaning is conveyed not by single sentences but by more complex exchanges
- ◉ participants' beliefs and expectations, the knowledge they share about each other and about the world, and the situation in which they interact, play a crucial part.

# USE OF LANGUAGE

- ◉ sustain social institutions and manipulate opinion;
- ◉ how it is used in the expression of ideology and the exercise of power.
- ◉ Express specialised language,
- ◉ Formal and informal language.

# DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPEAKING AND WRITING

- ◉ **WRITING**
- ◉ communicate across time and space for as long as the particular language and writing system is still understood.
- ◉ more complex; punctuation and layout
- ◉ Writers receive no immediate feedback from their readers
- ◉ Some grammatical constructions are only used in writing

# SPEAKING

Spoken language, as opposed to written language, has more of the following elements:

- ◉ **markers of interaction** (*I think, you know, perhaps, of course, isn't it?*)
- ◉ **fillers** (indicating that the speaker wishes to continue (*er, erm, well, ah*))
- ◉ **repetitions** of a word or phrase
- ◉ **expressions of attitude and opinion** (*good, wonderful etc.*)
- ◉ **hesitations, false starts and reformulation**
- ◉ **incomplete sentences**
- ◉ **One word sentences**

# SPEAKING

- ◉ **simple syntax** (less sub sentences, fewer heavy noun phrases)
- ◉ **fewer logical connectors**
- ◉ **monosyllabic connectors** (*and, but, if*)
- ◉ **simple, less specific vocabulary** (*thing, do, got, go*)
- ◉ **weak verbs** which strengthen a noun (*have a chat*)
- ◉ **prepositional expressions** (*feel down, on the up*)
- ◉ **Personal phrases** (*out of the question, not at all*)

# TEST YOURSELF

- Time:
- Place:
- People:
- Activity:
- Situation:
- Things:

# CONTEXT

The important aspects of context are

- ◉ identity of the speaker/writer
- ◉ identity of the hearer/reader
- ◉ time of the utterance
- ◉ place of utterance
- ◉ genre (the type of discourse - monologue, narrative etc.)
- ◉ channel (spoken or written)
- ◉ code (standard or dialect)
- ◉ previous discourse (what has been said or written previously)
- ◉ background knowledge (our knowledge of the world)



# WHY DO WE NEED CONTEXT TO INTERPRET A TEXT?

- ⦿ the assignment of **reference** (*I, this, the woman, here* etc.)
- ⦿ the assignment of **word meaning** in cases of similar spellings (*present, present, etc.*) and (*bank, bank* etc.)
- ⦿ the assignment of **intention** (e.g. *see you at 3*-as a promise or a threat)
- ⦿ the assignment of **truth** ( e.g. to confirm whether *It's snowing* is true or not)
- ⦿ the assignment of **appropriacy** (e.g. to determine the level of politeness of a phrase)

# TIME AND SPACE

- ⊙ the speaker/writer - e.g. *I, me, mine, myself, we, ours* etc.
- ⊙ the listener/reader - e.g. *you, your, yourself*
- ⊙ previously mentioned individuals - e.g. *he, her, it, them* etc.
- ⊙ the speaker's physical orientation - e.g. *here, behind me, to my left* etc.
- ⊙ the time of speaking - e.g. *now, a minute ago, last year* etc.
- ⊙ proximity to the speaker/character - e.g. *this/that, here/there* etc.
- ⊙ movement towards or away from the speaker e.g. *come, go, fetch, take, bring*

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