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MA1 S1 Pragmatics Exam Answer Key



I. MATCH each concept with its definition (5 p)

- Performative utterance: does not describe, report, or state anything, and is not ‘true or false’
- Locution: the grammatical structure of the utterance
- Perlocution: the intended or unintended effect that the utterance can have on the hearer
- Illocution: the intended meaning behind the utterance
- Constative utterance: ‘saying something’ that has the property of being either true or false

II. INDICATE the illocution, perlocution, and type of the following utterances (9 p).

1. There’s a fly in my soup. (said by a customer to the restaurant’s waiter)
2. A passerby says to a motorist with a flat tire, “Let me help you with that.”
3. A police officer says to a man who was speeding, “You’re under arrest”
4. A buyer says to a seller, “I agree with your terms”
5. A doctor says to a patient, “I advise you to stop smoking.”
6. A teacher says: “Let the unknown in this problem be Ax@.”

Utterance	illocution	perlocution	Type
1	Complaint	The waiter would apologize and replace the soup	Expressive
2	Offer	The motorist would receive/reject the help offered	Commissive
3	Arrest	The man respond to the arrest	Declarative
4	Agreement	The seller would complete the deal since agreed to	Commissive
5	Advice	The patient would listen to the doctors’ advising	Directive
6	Statement	The students would represent the unknown as Ax@	Representative

III. BRIEFLY EXPLAIN the differences between pragmatics, semantics, and discourse analysis (6 p)

Semantics is the study of literal meaning independent of context. Semantic meaning is found in dictionaries and includes denotative and connotative meaning while pragmatics studies the intended meaning which is non-literal, inferential, and not truth-conditional. Conversely, discourse analysis is more syntax-oriented and studies strings of sentences produced in a connected, unified, and coherent discourse.

Unlike semantics which is confined to the sentence level, both pragmatics and discourse analysis extend beyond the sentence level and examine language use in context (context-dependent).

Pragmatics uses discourse as data and seeks to draw generalizations that have predictive power whereas discourse analysis focuses on the individual discourse, using the findings of pragmatic theory to shed light on how a particular set of interlocutors use and interpret language in a specific context. Hence, pragmatics draws on natural language data to develop generalizations concerning linguistic behavior, whereas discourse analysis draws on these generalizations in order to more closely investigate natural language data.