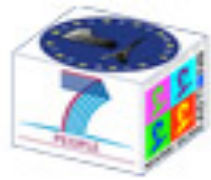




European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication International Summer School 2015



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**Mapping the impact and dissemination of the social
representation theory across different geo-cultural contexts
around the world: from Europe towards other continents**

**at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication
Research Center and Multimedia LAB**

18th - 25th July 2015



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

Social representations and language

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So.Re.Com. Joint-IDP International Lab Meeting

Objective

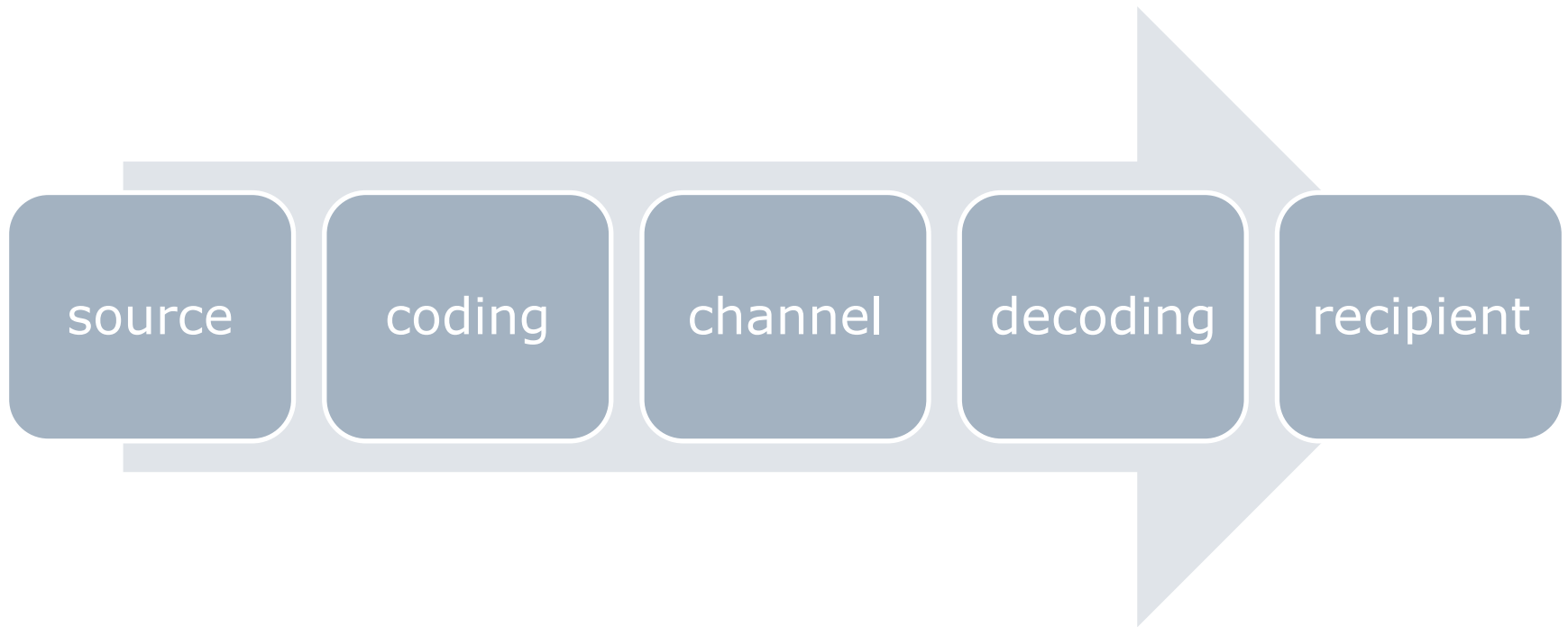
- To show how pragmatics contributes to the construction of social representations
 - Politeness theory (Brown and Levinson, 1987)
-

Structure

- Social representations and language use
 - Politeness theory
 - Application to research
-

Social representations and language use

□ The encoder-decoder model



Beyond encoder –decoder models

- However, authors who study social representations indicate serious constraints to this model of communication
-

Moscovici, 1994

- By the notion of anchoring of representations, I wanted to express the link between generating sense and communicating
 - But in this communication, linguistic forms are not enough to explain how the communicated message is received and then understood
 - Too often the communication of a message does not coincide with linguistic communication properly speaking.
 - **What we effectively transmit in a statement is underdetermined by the implemented semantic content**
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-
- For example: Could you pass me the salt?
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General hypothesis

- Understanding how social representations are constructed require moving beyond linguistic meaning
 - How social representations of relationships between speakers are regulated in the use of language in social interaction
-

-
- Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that analyses language use in context
 - Speaker's meaning vs. linguistic meaning
 - Assumptions are violated to regulate social interaction
-

Face (Goffman, 1967)

- Face emerges when a person interacts with another one
 - It is the public self image that a person would like to claim when interacting with another person
 - An interactant's face can only be maintained if negotiated with the other person
 - Face is a socially situated identity
-

Saving face

- In interpersonal interactions, each person's face is vulnerable and is threatened
 - Saving face depends on continuous negotiation with the other person
-

Positive and negative face

- Face has two components
 - Negative face: The desire of autonomy. One's own actions should not be impeded by others
 - Positive face: The desire of social approval. A positive relationship should be maintained with the other person
-

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It's all in how you ask.

search ID: bstn27

Facework

- Speech acts threaten...
 - The hearer's negative face (asking for something)
 - The hearer's positive face (criticize)
 - The speaker's negative face (thank)
 - The speaker's positive face (apologize)
-

Some examples

- What image threaten the next speech acts?
 - You are nice! B: Thanks
 - Don't forget to take the money to the ban
 - Sorry for having behaved in a rude way
 - You have disappointed me!
-

How can threatening acts be managed?

- Communicators take into account three different goals
 - The desire to communicate the threatening act
 - The desire to be efficient
 - The desire to maintain the hearer's face
-

Strategies to perform speech acts

Strategy	Procedure	Example
On record	Conversational maxims are followed	Close the window! You are wrong What do you think about my new coat? awful
Positive politeness	Common ground Cooperation/ familiarity Answer to the hearer's wants	Close the window, my dear I know what you mean but Give me two coins
Negative politeness	Conventional politeness No coercion Desire to avoid imposition Perception of debt	Could you close the window? I'm afraid that... I hate to impose but...
Off record	Conversational maxims are broken, ambiguous, metaphors	It is cold in here! How's work? Superb (irony)

Positive politeness

- Claim common ground
 - Notice, attend to hearer: 'Oh! you cut your hair!
 - Exaggerate: We spent such a fantastic day!
 - Intensify interest: I think he lied to me. I mean it!
 - Ingroup markers: Eat what's left, honey
 - Seek agreement, avoid disagreement: -They are so stupid! -Right, it's incredible; It's true that..., but it's also true that..., 'it's nice in a way'
 - Presuppose common ground: isn't it nice? Don't you want to come for a beer?
 - Jokes
-

Positive politeness

- Convey both are cooperators
 - Presuppose knowledge: 'I know you are very busy and that you've had an awful day, but I would really like you to do this for me'
 - Offer and promise: 'I'll do it for tomorrow' 'Afterwards we have a beer'
 - Be optimistic: Invite me to smoke a cigarette. I have none left. Why don't we go to have a coffee?
-
- Assert reciprocity: 'Let's go girls!'

Negative politeness

- Be conventionally indirect
- Question, hedge
 - I 'm *pretty* sure, I 've seen that movie before; "I *rather* think you shouldn 't do that; "You 're *quite* right."
- Be pessimistic.
 - You couldn't give me a cigarette, could you?
- Minimize imposition
 - Just a moment; could I borrow your pen just for while?
- Give deference

 - Did you move my luggage?, perhaps you don 't mind...?

Negative politeness

- Apologize
 - “I hope this isn’t going to bother you *too much*:...”
 - “I hate to impose, but...”
 - Impersonalize
 - I would appreciate it if you could...; we cannot help you; do this for me
 - State as a general rule
 - Passengers will please refrain from smoking in this room”, “The committee requests the President...”
 - Normalize
 - Your good performance on the exam was impressive
 - Incurring a debt
 - I’ll never be able to repay...
-

Off record

- ❑ Quality maxim: Sarcastic irony 'that's brilliant' metaphors 'my job is a jail', 'did someone leave the light on?'
 - ❑ Manner maxim (be clear): Vagueness 'I wonder who forgot to do dishes'
 - ❑ Quantity maxim: 'it's ok', long excuses
 - ❑ Relation maxim (be relevant): 'I'm thirsty'
-

What determines the weight of the threat?

- Power. The more perceived power the more polite strategies
 - Social distance. The greater the social distance the more polite the strategies
 - Degree of act imposition. The more imposing the act, the more polite the strategy
-

Get
around in

ENGLISH

Lesson Twenty Five
How to be Polite

1. Wrong



2. Right



-
- How do people deal in conversation with HIV?
 - How language is used?
 - What does it tell us about social representations of HIV?
-

Not performing the speech act

- Yes, I have this anguish of not being able to say –I’ve been to have a blood test done-, why not? It’s gnawing at me all the time. Sometimes I say –I’ll have it tattooed- so if I don’t say it at least others could see it. (int: 31, p.26, female participant in medical center, 43 years old).
-

Non-verbal hints

- They have been my closest friends since I was a child. They know my life, and... –what pills are you taking? –Oh! Nothing... it's just for my stomach, and so... When you notice that somebody knows it's better to express it openly" (int: 39, p. 4, female participant in medical center, 37 years old).
-

Off-record strategy

- "at home with my ex-husband, it was... you couldn't talk about the issue, he called it the drama, -the drama that happens to us, -the drama we have, -the drama we are in. That was the concept... it hurt me"
 - "if what's happened hadn't happened ... we could have another baby".
-

Negative politeness

- “Once, a girlfriend panicked when I told her, it was like, oh god! ...That she pitied me, that she was so scared I could die..., and I asked myself, Why on earth have I told her?” (int: 12, p. 15, female participant in association, 42 years old).
-

Positive politeness

- "... sure, as I needed to unload myself I told it to my two best girlfriends, only because of that, to relieve... They've always helped me a lot, always, always... they are lifelong friends to whom I can always turn" (int: 32, p. 4, female participant in medical center, 36 years old).
 - "it's much easier to relate to each other because we have something..., something which is very emotive and that pulls us together, something like warmth and heat between us" (int: 11, p. 9, female participant in association, 49 years old).
-

On-record speech acts

- “It makes me feel pride. Look... it’s paradoxical but I feel proud of my condition, I manage it with dignity and I say it clear and loud, because I think it’s a personal work to arrive there...” (int: 11, p. 5, female participant in association, 49 years old).
 - “... and I know my friends, the people I know are afraid other people know. But of course, I’m an activist and I’m for visibility. I go on televisions or anywhere. I have no problem with it” (int: 1, p. 3, male participant in association, 39 years old).
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Conclusion

- Going beyond the text and focusing on language use shows how social representations about an object are constructed in social interaction
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Thank you