But hearing and seeing are not enough.Compare "I'd never say THAT" with one focus and "I / would NEVer / say THAT" with three. Typically, when speech is represented in print, italics are sometimes used to indicate the accent, but this is done only sporadically and unevenly; our writing system largely neglects this important element of spoken communication. A written transcript of a speech can be highly misleading because it is only a partial rendition of that speech. In speech there is always an accent in some part of an utterance, and placement of accent in different parts of an utterance creates differences of meaning. Y 3 Whatdid O D 4 What I In the English language accent is mobile, enabling us to communicate different meanings by putting the emphasis in different places. The usual place is on the last important word, for instance: My cousin is an ARchitect. If the utterance is broken into two or more sense groups, each group has its own accent. The last accent is ordinarily the most prominent of all because the pitch changes on that syllable. My COUsin is an ARchitect. My cousin EDward, who lives in FULton, is an ARchitect. Thus the speaker can highlight one word or several words in an utterance and give special focus to that word or those words. The placement of accent on different words ties the utterance to what has been said preciously. For example, in reply to the question "What does your cousin do?," one might say My cousin's Edward's an ARchitecht.As speakers we typically hesitate as we figure what we intend to say; we put in 'fillers' ("Well"; "As a matter of fact..."); we repeat; we correct ourselves ("I mean"); we appeal to the addressee's understanding ("You know"). So even a short utterance like the one above can come out this way: Well, I'll uh let you know (pause) the answer (pause) as soon – as soon as I get the information (pause) from a friend of mine (pause) who lives in Winchester. 16 Introducing English Semantics This may look strange on the printed page because in written English we are used to seeing the result of careful planning and polishing but conversational speech is scarcely ever planned and polished. Practice 2.1 Context and meaning The meaning of any language symbol depends to some extent on the context in which it occurs. Here are two 'narratives' that are rather vague because a lot of details are missing, but in each group the mere collocation of the words that are there tells a sort of story. (a) ... pain ... clinic ... doctor ... examine ... surgery ... hospital ... nurses ... surgeon ... successful operation ... quick recovery (b) ... rocket ... preparation ... countdown ... blastoff ... orbit ... splashdown ... quick recovery ... successful operation The term successful operation occurs in both stories. Does it seem to have the same meaning in both of them? The phrase quick recovery also occurs in both stories. Does it have the same meaning in both? Listeners – and to a lesser extent readers – often have to fill in information that the speaker or writer takes for granted. For example, suppose that A and B are standing somewhere and A says to B, "This was the site of the old Stanwick Theater.The stage was over here on the right and the lobby over there on the left." B will probably understand well enough, but his understanding is due to the fact that he inserts, between the two utterances, the information that the Stanwick Theater had a stage and a lobby – A has not told him so, or has not exactly told him so. The English definite article the is used in some proper names like 'the Stanwick Theater,' 'the Hudson River,' 'the Alps,' and it is used with ordinary nouns such as stage and lobby when these have already been introduced into the discourse. Since they are just now entering the discourse, B must relate the new information to what has been said, and he will probably do so without even recognizing that his comprehension is due to his own contribution. A bit of information inserted in

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such a context is called an implicature – a conversational implicature, to be precise. An implicature is a bridge constructed by the hearer (or reader) to relate one utterance to some previous utterance, and often the hearer or reader makes this connection unconsciously. In this case the bridge is easy to construct; our knowledge of the world lets us take for Has the Winston Street bus come yet? 2 C: D: Oh? What did you say? I'm afraid Fred didn't like the remark I made. 3 E: F: And you? What did you say? Some of my partners said they wouldn't accept these terms. 4 G: H: Oh? What did you say? You're misquoting me. I didn't say anything like that. Language in use 17 granted the fact that a theater has a stage and a lobby. If the speaker were to say "This was the site of the old Stanwick Theater.Individual speakers may vary somewhat in just what they pronounce, but the four renditions can be represented as follows, where the most prominent syllable is indicated with capital letters and the rising or falling 1 T did you say?Intonation and accent together constitute prosody, the meaningful elements of speech apart from the words that are uttered.U say?D you say?

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