# Seneca 2022 International Conference

## Conversational behaviour as characterisation: Pragmatics in Senecan Tragedy

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# Conversational behaviour as characterisation: Pragmatics in Senecan Tragedy

- Introduction
- Case study
- LiLa
- Conclusions

# What more can we say about Seneca?

characterisation through linguistic behaviour
in Senecan tragedies

Tragic as isolation – represented in dialogue as problems in communicating

# Theoretical framework\1

## Conversation Analysis (CA)

Schegloff, Emanuel A. (2007). *Sequence Organization in Interaction, Volume 1: A Primer in Conversation Analysis*. Leiden: Cambridge University Press.

## Pragmatics of Communication

Watzlawick, Paul; Helmick Beavin, Janet; Jackson, Don D. (1967): *Pragmatics of human communication. A study of interactional patterns, pathologies, and paradoxes*. New York: Norton.

# Theoretical framework\2

## Common Ground (CG)

Clark, Herbert H. (1996). *Using language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## Cognitive Linguistics

Verhagen, Arie (2005): *Constructions of Intersubjectivity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

# Realm of studies: Historical Pragmatics

Jucker, Andreas H., ed., (1995). *Historical Pragmatics*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamin.

Jucker, Andreas H., Taavitsainen, Irma, eds., (2010). *Historical pragmatics*. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

# Realm of studies: Literary Pragmatics

Herman, Vimala (1995). *Dramatic discourse: Dialogue as interaction in plays*. London/New York: Routledge.

Locher, Miriam A., Jucker, Andreas H., eds., (2017). *Pragmatics of Fiction*. Berlin: de Gruyter.

# Conversational behaviour as characterisation

## Specific linguistic features

- Carom-communication

Ricottilli, Licinia (2013). Strategie comunicative "a carambola" in Terenzio (Ph. 350–377; Andr., 459–497; 740–795). *Dionysus ex machina* 4, 133–145.

- Non-interpellation

Orlandini, Anna, Poccetti, Paolo (2010): Stratégies discursives de non-interpellation et échecs de l'interpellation dans des dialogues latins. *Corela: Cognition, Représentation, Langage* [HS-8], (http://journals.openedition.org/corela/1045; DOI: 10.4000/corela.1045).

- Interruptions

Verano, R. (ed.) (in press) *Conversation Analysis and Classics*. Brill

# Conversational behaviour as characterisation

## Conversation in CG perspective

Conversation is an example *par excellence* of a joint activity in which the joint actions are aperiodic, unbalanced, and alternating. It is aperiodic because it has no cadence, unbalanced because it is led largely by the speaker, and alternating because who speaks alternates turn by turn.

*A joint project is a joint action projected by one of its participants and taken up by the others.* … the joint construal of an utterance, a signal, gets established in an interactive, sequential process that depends on the joint projects they contribute to, and vice versa.

… joint projects are essential to reaching joint construals of what speakers are to be taken to mean.

Clark 1996: 58; 87; 191-192; 219-220 (emphasis in original).

Clark, Herbert H. (1996). *Using language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# Conversational behaviour as characterisation

## Conversation in CG perspective

Almost every event is open to differing construals - and this is especially true of social actions.

In social processes, the argument goes, people often need to agree on what is taking place. One way of reaching consensus is by displaying construals of what is taking place for the others to accept or correct, and that often leads people to revise their intentions in greater or smaller ways. The process is sequential and interactive.

Clark 1996: 195-196.

Clark, Herbert H. (1996). *Using language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# Conversational behaviour as characterisation

## Conversation in Intersubjectivity perspective

… an addressee takes an utterance not primarily as an instruction to construe an object of conceptualization in a particular way, but as an instruction to engage in a reasoning process, and to draw certain conclusions; it is typically not just attending to the same object, but understanding what the speaker/writer is 'getting at' (what she wants you to infer), that counts as successful communication. The latter establishes a direct relationship between the coordinating minds

Verhagen 2005: 12-13.

Verhagen, Arie (2005): *Constructions of Intersubjectivity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

# Conversational behaviour as characterisation: Pragmatics in Senecan Tragedy

# Failure in communication

## Seneca *Agamemnon* 788b-801

Agamemnon Cassandra

# Failure in communication

**Before the dialogue**: settings of Agamemnon's and Cassandra's interaction

Sen. *Ag. 775-781*

*CHORUS Iam pervagatus ipse se fregit 775*
***furor**, caditque flexo qualis ante aras genu*
*cervice taurus vulnus incertum gerens.*
*relevemus artus. En deos tandem suos*
***victrice lauru cinctus Agamemnon** adit,*
*et festa coniunx obvios illi tulit gressus, 780*
*reditque iuncta concordi gradu.*

CHORUS Now **her madness** has spent itself with its ramblings, and she sinks down, as a bull sinks on bent knees before the altar, bearing an ill-aimed wound in its neck. Let us lift her body. See, at last **Agamemnon** comes before his own gods, **crowned with the victor's laurel**; his wife went out to meet him in festive mood, and returns walking in concord at his side.

Fitch, John, G. (2001). *Seneca Tragedies vol. 2*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

# Failure in communication

**Before the dialogue**: settings of Agamemnon's and Cassandra's interaction

Sen. *Ag. 782-789*

*AGAMEMNON Tandem revertor sospes ad patrios lares.*
*o cara salve terra! tibi tot barbarae*
*dedere gentes spolia, tibi felix diu*
*potentis Asiae domina summisit manus. 785*
*Quid ista vates corpus effusa ac tremens*
*dubia labat cervice? famuli, attollite,*
*refovete gelido latice. iam recipit diem*
*marcente visu.*

AGAMEMNON At long last I return in safety to my father's house gods. Greetings, my dear land! To you so many barbarian peoples have yielded spoils, to you the long-thriving mistress of powerful Asia has surrendered. Why is the priestess lying there trembling and fainting, her neck drooping? Servants, raise her, revive her with cold water. Now she sees the light again, but with dull eyes.

Fitch, John, G. (2001). *Seneca Tragedies vol. 2*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

# Failure in communication

Sen. *Ag. 789-801*

*AGAMEMNON Suscita sensus tuos:*

*optatus ille portus aerumnis adest.*                           790

*festus dies est. CASSANDRA Festus et Troiae fuit.*

*AG. Veneremur aras. CA. Cecidit ante aras pater.*

*AG. Iovem precemur pariter. CA. Herceum Iovem?*

*AG. Credis videre te Ilium? CA. Et Priamum simul.*

*AG. Hic Troia non est. CA. Helena ubi est, Troiam puto.*   795

*AG. Ne metue dominam famula. CA. Libertas adest.*

*AG. Secura vive! CA. Mihi mori est securitas.*

*AG. Nullum est periclum tibimet. CA. At magnum tibi.*

*AG. Victor timere quid potest? CA. Quod non timet.*

*AG. Hanc, fida famuli turba, dum excutiat deum,*             800
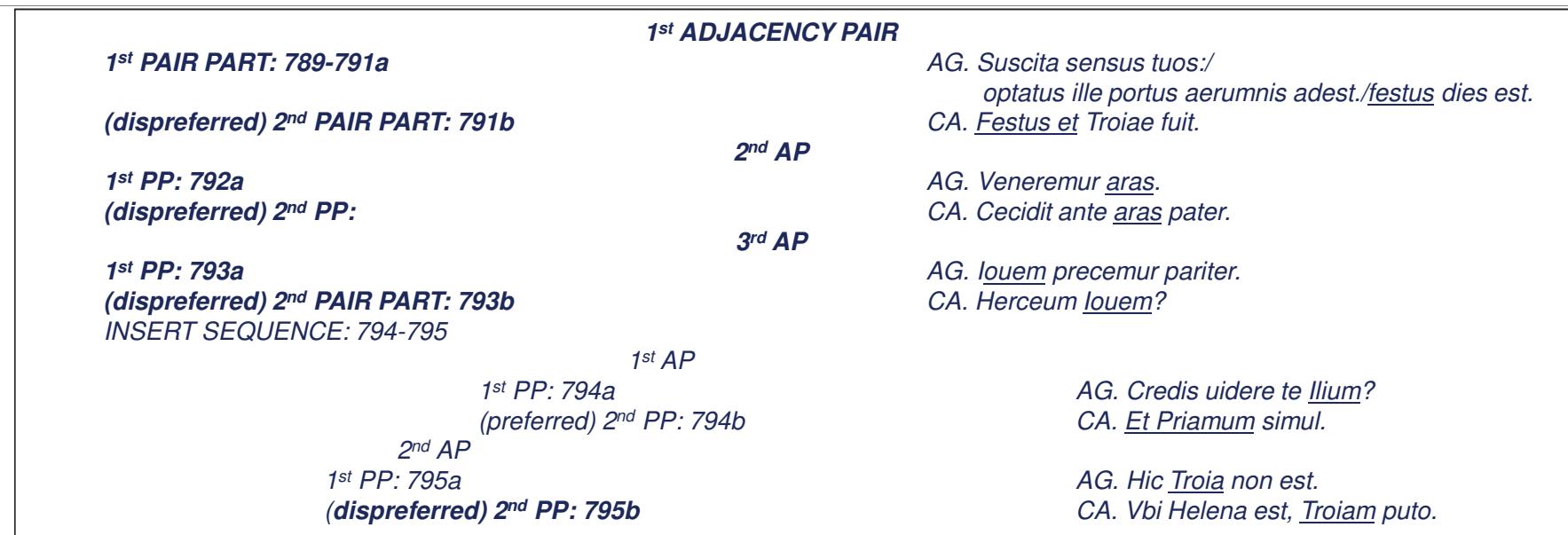
*retinete ne quid impotens peccet furor.*

AGAMEMNON Gather your senses: the longed-for haven from sufferings is here at hand. This is a festive day! CASSANDRA It was festive too at Troy. AG. Let us do reverence at the altar. CA. Father fell before an altar. AG. Let us pray to Jove together. CA. Hercean Jove? AG. You think you see Ilium? CA. Yes, and Priam as well. AG. Here is not Troy. CA. Where Helen is, I think it Troy. AG. Do not fear your mistress, though a slave. CA. Freedom is close. AG. Live in security! CA. For me death is security. AG. There is no danger for you. CA. But great danger for you. AG. What can a conqueror fear? CA. What he does not fear. AG. My loyal band of servants, restrain her until she throws off the god's influence, lest her wayward madness should commit some offense.

Fitch, John, G. (2001). *Seneca Tragedies vol. 2*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

# Failure in communication

CASSANDRA:

cohesive
devices

co-construction
of the
conversation

standard
conversational
behaviour

**1st ADJACENCY PAIR**

**1st PAIR PART: 789-791a**

*(dispreferred) 2nd PAIR PART: 791b*

**1st PP: 792a**
*(dispreferred) 2nd PP:*

**1st PP: 793a**
*(dispreferred) 2nd PAIR PART: 793b*
*INSERT SEQUENCE: 794-795*

*2nd AP*

*3rd AP*

*1st AP*
*1st PP: 794a*
*(preferred) 2nd PP: 794b*

*2nd AP*
*1st PP: 795a*
*(dispreferred) 2nd PP: 795b*

*AG. Suscita sensus tuos:/*
*optatus ille portus aerumnis adest./festus dies est.*
*CA. Festus et Troiae fuit.*

*AG. Veneremur aras.*
*CA. Cecidit ante aras pater.*

*AG. Iouem precemur pariter.*
*CA. Herceum Iouem?*

*AG. Credis uidere te Ilium?*
*CA. Et Priamum simul.*

*AG. Hic Troia non est.*
*CA. Vbi Helena est, Troiam puto.*

AGAMEMNON:

egocentric
communication

not standard
conversational
behaviour

Figure 1. CA Sen. *Ag.* 789-795

Iurescia forthcoming. *Effare aperte. Pragmatica dei dialoghi nella tragedia romana.*

Keysar, B. (2008): Egocentric Processes in Communication and Miscommunication, in I. Kecskés, Mey, J. (eds.), *Intention, Common Ground and the Egocentric Speaker-Hearer*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 277-296.

Fitch, John, G. (2001). *Seneca Tragedies vol. 2*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

# Failure in communication

CASSANDRA:

cohesive devices

co-construction of the conversation

standard conversational behaviour

AGAMEMNON:

egocentric communication

not standard conversational behaviour

**6th ADJACENCY PAIR**

**1st PAIR PART: 796a**
**(dispreferred) 2nd PAIR PART: 796b**
**7th AP**

AG. *Ne metue dominam* <u>famula</u>.
CA. <u>Libertas</u> *adest.*/

**1st PP: 797a**
**(dispreferred) 2nd PP:797b**
**8th AP**

AG. <u>Secura</u> <u>uiue</u>.
CA. Mihi <u>mori</u> est <u>securitas</u>./

**1st PP: 798a**
**(dispreferred) 2nd PP: 798b**
**9th AP**

AG. <u>Nullum</u> est <u>periclum</u> tibimet.
CA. <u>At magnum tibi</u>./

**1st PP: 799a**
**(dispreferred?) 2nd PP: 799b**

AG. Victor <u>timere</u> quid potest?
CA. <u>Quod non timet.</u>/

Figure 1. CA Sen. *Ag.* 796-799

Iurescia forthcoming. *Effare aperte. Pragmatica dei dialoghi nella tragedia romana.*

Keysar, B. (2008): Egocentric Processes in Communication and Miscommunication, in I. Kecskés, Mey, J. (eds.), *Intention, Common Ground and the Egocentric Speaker-Hearer*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 277-296.

Fitch, John, G. (2001). *Seneca Tragedies vol. 2*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

# Failure in communication

Sen. *Ag. 789-801*

<table>
<tr><td>CASSANDRA:</td><td>

*AGAMEMNON Suscita sensus tuos:*
*optatus ille portus aerumnis adest.*     *790*
*festus dies est. CASSANDRA Festus et Troiae fuit.*

</td><td>

AGAMEMNON Gather your senses: the longed-for haven from sufferings is here at hand. This is a festive day! CASSANDRA It was festive too at Troy. …

</td><td>AGAMEMNON:</td></tr>
<tr><td>cohesive devices</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>co-construction of the conversation</td><td>

*…*
*AG. Iovem precemur pariter. CA. Herceum Iovem?*
*AG. Credis videre te Ilium? CA. Et Priamum simul.*

</td><td>

AG. Let us pray to Jove together. CA. Hercean Jove? AG. You think you see Ilium? CA. Yes, and Priam as well.

…

</td><td>egocentric communication</td></tr>
<tr><td>standard conversational behaviour</td><td>

*…*
*AG. Victor timere quid potest? CA. Quod non timet.*
*AG. Hanc, fida famuli turba, dum excutiat deum,*   *800*
*retinete ne quid impotens peccet furor.*

</td><td>

AG. What can a conqueror fear? CA. What he does not fear. AG. My loyal band of servants, restrain her until she throws off the god's influence, lest her wayward madness should commit some offense.

</td><td>not standard conversational behaviour</td></tr>
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Keysar, B. (2008): Egocentric Processes in Communication and Miscommunication, in I. Kecskés, Mey, J. (eds.), *Intention, Common Ground and the Egocentric Speaker-Hearer*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 277-296.

Fitch, John, G. (2001). *Seneca Tragedies vol. 2*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

# Failure in communication

CASSANDRA:

*vates*

*Furor?*

takes
Clytemnestra's
presence into
account?

CLYTEMNESTRA:

*persona muta*

AGAMEMNON:

*Victor*

Self-oriented
/
Evaluation of Cassandra
as not reliable
conversational partener

does not understand
what
Cassandra
is 'getting at'

Verhagen, Arie (2005): *Constructions of Intersubjectivity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

# Conversational behaviour as characterisation

## Failure in communication as isolation

CASSANDRA:

perceived *furor*

AGAMEMNON:

Lack of Intersubjectivity

Isolation

Verhagen, Arie (2005): *Constructions of Intersubjectivity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

# Conversational behaviour as characterisation

## Failure in communication as isolation

CASSANDRA

Seer                                                                                  Interlocutor

VS

Riddles, obscurity                                                          Standard conversation

# Conversational behaviour as characterisation: Pragmatics in Senecan Tragedy

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# Conversational behaviour as characterisation

## Failure in communication as isolation

CASSANDRA

AMBIGUITY

Senecan Tragedy

# Conversational behaviour as characterisation

## Failure in communication as isolation

CASSANDRA

AMBIGUITY

Senecan Tragedy

# Conversational behaviour as characterisation

## Interoperability between lexical and textual resources in Latin

Searches for the occurrences of the words whose definition in the LS dictionary includes the word "obscurely" in Senecan tragedies

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ambages | dilogia | flexiloquus | obliquitas | perplexio |
| ambifariam | duplex | | obliquoloquus | perplexus |
| ambifarie | | | | |
| ambifarius | | | | |
| ambiformiter | | | | |
| ambigue | | | | |
| ambiguitas | | | | |
| ambiguous | | | | |
| amphiboles | | | | |

# Conversational behaviour as characterisation
## Interoperability between lexical and textual resources in Latin

| Tragedy | line | character speaking | addressee | lineQuote |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agamemnon | 1 | Thyestis umbra | Audience | *Opaca linquens Ditis inferni loca* |
| Agamemnon | 3 | Thyestis umbra | Audience | *incertus utras oderim sedes magis* |
| Agamemnon | 50 | Thyestis umbra | Audience | *quid dextra dubio trepida consilio labat?* |
| Agamemnon | 140 | Clytemnestra | Nutrix | *incerta dubitat unda cui cedat malo* |
| Agamemnon | 146 | Clytemnestra | Nutrix | *Cui ultima est fortuna, quid dubiam timet?* |
| Agamemnon | 147 | Nutrix | Clytemnestra | *Tuta est latetque culpa, si pateris, tua* |
| Agamemnon | 309 | Aegisthus | Clytemnestra | *secede mecum potius, ut rerum statum/dubium ac minacem iuncta consilia explicent* |
| Agamemnon | 407 | Clytemnestra | Eurybates | *nam certa fari sors maris dubii vetat* |
| Agamemnon | 420 | Clytemnestra | Eurybates | *dubia plus torquent mala* |
| Agamemnon | 434 | Eurybates | Clytemnestra | *splendetque classe pelagus et pariter latet* |
| Agamemnon | 456 | Eurybates | Clytemnestra | *Iam litus omne tegitur et campi latent* |
| Agamemnon | 457 | Eurybates | Clytemnestra | *dubia parent montis Idaei iuga* |
| Agamemnon | 473 | Eurybates | Clytemnestra | *densa tenebras obruit caligo* |
| Agamemnon | 479 | Eurybates | Clytemnestra | *Strymonius altas Aquilo contorquet nives* |
| Agamemnon | 714 | Chorus | Audience | *incerta nutant lumina et versi retro* |
| Agamemnon | 726 | Cassandra | Chorus | *Ubi sum? fugit lux alma et obscurat genas* |
| Agamemnon | 727 | Cassandra | Chorus | *nox alta et aether abditus tenebris latet* |
| Agamemnon | 729 | Cassandra | Chorus | *duplices domos Argos* |
| Agamemnon | 748 | Chorus | Audience | *incertos geris,/Deiphobe, vultus, coniugis munus novae* |
| Agamemnon | 777 | Chorus | Audience | *caditque [scil. Cassandra] flexo qualis ante aras genu/cervice taurus vulnus incertum gerens* |
| Agamemnon | 787 | Agamemnon | Chorus | *Quid ista vates corpus effusa ac tremens/dubia labat cervice?* |
| Agamemnon | 874 | Cassandra | Chorus | *imago visus dubia non fallit meos* |
| Agamemnon | 903 | Cassandra | Chorus | *stat ecce Titan dubius emerito die* |
| Agamemnon | 930 | Electra | Strophius | *per sceptra terris nota, per dubios deos* |
| Agamemnon | 984 | Electra | Aegisthus | *per scelera natus, nomen ambiguum suis* |

Senecan Tragedy

LiLa
Linking Latin

http://lila-erc.eu:8080/lila-lisp/

# Conversational behaviour as characterisation

## Interoperability between lexical and textual resources in Latin

| Tragedy | line | character speaking | addressee | lineQuote |
|---------|------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|
| *Oedipus* | 214 | Creo | Oedipus | **ambage** *flexa Delphico mos est deo/arcana tegere* |
| *Oedipus* | 212 | Creo | Oedipus | *responsa* **dubia** *sorte* **perplexa** *iacent* |
| *Oedipus* | 641 | Laius | Creon | *magisque monstrum Sphynge* **perplexum** *sua* |
| *Phaedra* | 639 | Hippolytus | Phaedra | **ambigua uoce uerba perplexa** *iacis* |
| *Phaedra* | 858 | Theseus | Nutrix | **Perplexa** *magnum* **verba** *nescioquid tegunt* |

# Conversational behaviour as characterisation

## Failure in communication as isolation

CASSANDRA

AMBIGUITY

Senecan Tragedy

# Conversational behaviour as characterisation: Pragmatics in Senecan Tragedy

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# Conversational behaviour as characterisation

Failure in communication as isolation

Isolation as feature of tragic?

Senecan tragic dialogues as representation of human isolation?

# Seneca 2022 International Conference

Thanks!!!