Hello students welcome back to our course on visual semantics for visual communication in our last lecture we looked into the seniority landscape. We first try to explore the term what semiotics is and basically we understood it is a domain which deals with signs and inter relationships of science and then we looked into the different types of science. What are the different modes of science and how they work around us in prevalence so we looked into three types of science, and they are available all around us.

So we communicate visually using this science either in an iconic fashion or in an indexical fashion or in a symbolic fashion, so today we will go one step further and we will look at the three essential components or study areas of semiotics so basically we have three essential component of semiotics. So we looked into semiotic landscape here we were talking about design.

Today we will look at there are three areas in which the semiotics work and that creates the world of semiotics and these three areas are termed as syntax, semantics and the pragmatics. So many a times you have seen this word semantics being used for semiotics I Have used that interchangeably it is colloquially also very commonly used semiotics as semantics but there is definitely a difference.

And there are other two things along with semantics which always play handymen so what is syntax one is semantics and the other is pragmatic. So today we will just recapitulate what we have studied last in the last class and then take it from there.

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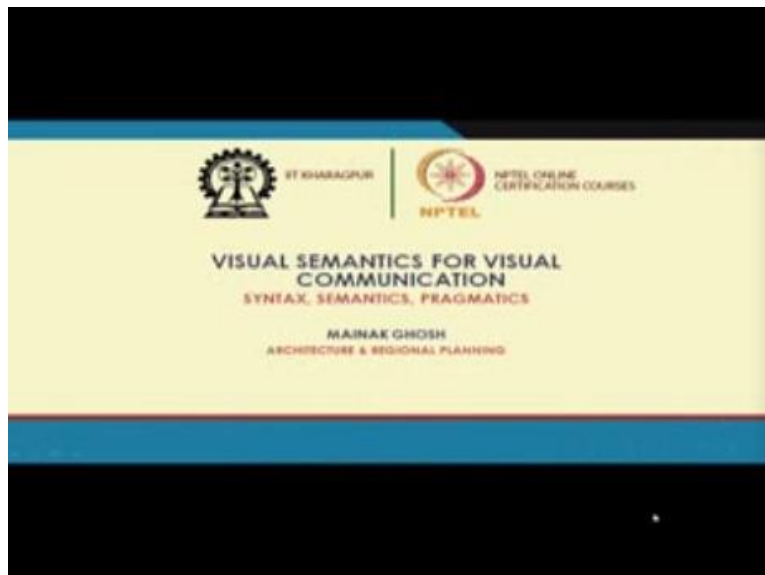
So what he looked into our last class is we talked about these signifier and the signified so I will just recap what we have done so basically the signifier, the signifier is the one which stands for something else.

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So basically what you learnt is we have a signifier which could be an object which could be a sound which could be anything, which would be a visual it is just something else which stands for something others. Or which is signifying something else which we are calling as be signified, so we are signifying something using a signifier so in this particular case the word tree or the sound 3 represents so this is signifying the signified is the tree in itself.

So we have a real time tree which is the object that is being signified so that is why we are called signified and that is signified by what this sound tree or this was 3, so this is more or less plain and simple to understand that. And then we looked into so this is the caesarian model of semiotic conventional way of looking at semiotics where sorcerer was looking at the interrelationships of different words.

And how they connect up and wind up meaning so this, this evolved from there but what happened with course of time we landed up in some modified diagram for this where we see the

last comment over here which is very, very interesting important is that this mental concept is broadly common to all members of the same culture who share the same language. So when we are talking about the signifier and signified say in terms of the word tree. Here one thing we are taking in common that the members are part of the same culture that is why they understand this that is why they understand the significance of a tree being termed as a tree.

So there comes a concept of the interpreted so apart from the signifier initially classically if we look at there was a lot of emphasis given on the signifier and signified, but what we see here another important aspect came into picture is the involvement of the person who is interpreting that okay.

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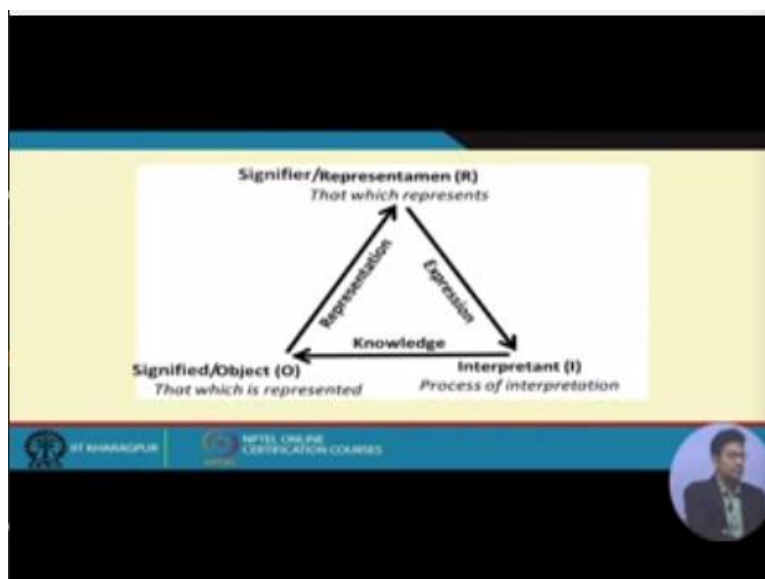
And that led to the next diagrammatic representation which is the, object of course so this of course an object which is involved there is a signifier or the sign which is required and then there is an interpreter. So the and they are connected by the three expressions which are the interpreted

as a knowledge of the object obviously, you need to have a knowledge of the object, or then the object is being represented by the sign in some fashion.

And this sign has an expression this sign has an expression either in terms of sound or in terms of some kind of visual which is image or in terms of some kind of script which is writing so it has some kind of expression which again comes back to the interpreted and the interpreting looks at it and make some judgment out of it makes them meaning out of it. So this is what is happening in the semiotic landscape that,

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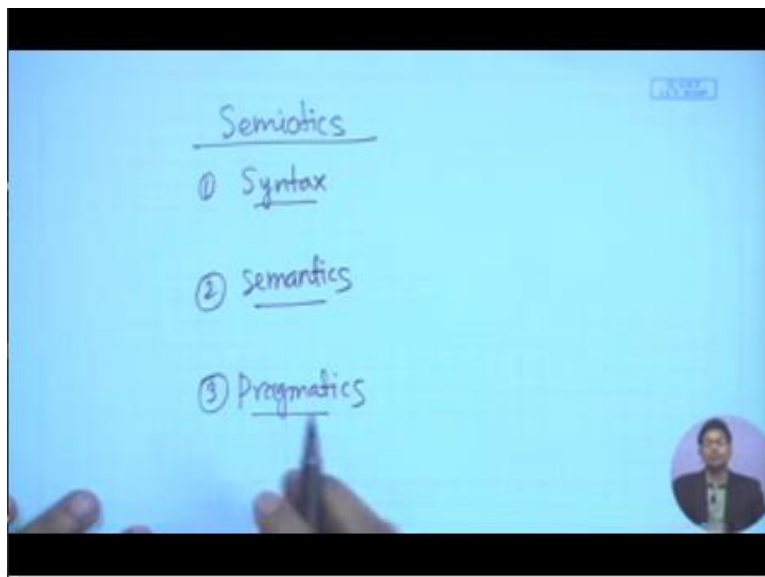
We have talked about why we are talking about it today again is from here now we move on to the next step of understanding what syntax is what semantics is and what pragmatic is. Now in very short if we look at the three words you have syntax you have semantics and you have pragmatics. So we have these three terminologies or three areas which formed the semiotics the semiotics always involve these three areas of studies okay.

So syntax in short if we look at what are the three things, always remember this as a thumb rule that syntax is something related to form okay. Syntax is something which is related to form so syntax is related to form, semantics is related to meaning and pragmatics is related to use, use or user or usage so I recapitulate again syntax when we talk about semiotics when we are talking about science and application of science it works in threefold fashion.

The first aspect of it is the form itself or we talked about the expression of the sign, so there has to be a form there has to be a structure a physical presence of the sign. So this is what is known as syntax, then of course suggest having a form is not enough as you as you understand having a form is not enough you have to associate some meaning with it. So this meaning association whenever we associate some meaning with the sign that is called semantics.

So the whole discipline or domain area of study which involves association of meaning is semantics, that is why we are many a times using it interchangeably, for similar semiotics is that that semiotics is a sign is concerned with sign and the meaning association is concerned with semantics that is why they are used interchangeably. And the third one which is pragmatics as the name suggests it is related to pragmatism, it is related to use it, it is related to the users so they also play an important role in this diagram.

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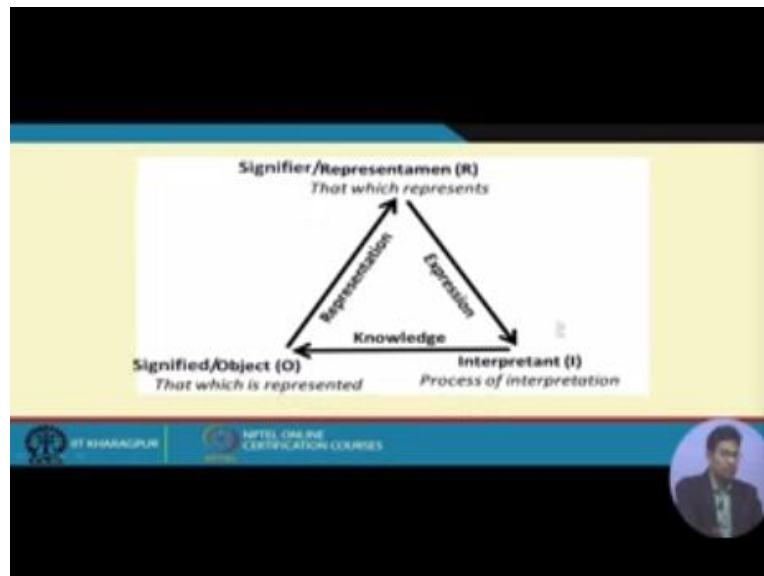
When we talk about this diagram all of the three things play an important role over here so now putting it together. How we look how we are putting it together sir according to saucer, we were only looking at the signifier and the signified. But according to peers we add one more aspect to it which is the interpreted objects aspect. So we have the object, we have designed vehicle many are times you will encounter this word where they are explaining it as a sign vehicle, this is nothing but the representation or the sign itself or the signifiers.

So this is the signifier objectively signifies and then you have an interpreted who is sitting on top of it and making this decision. So this is how we are framing the three things together now as I have explained earlier these three things are related to form about meaning and about the usage now we will go, one by one deeper into each of it and then look at what semantics is doing what syntax is doing and what pragmatics is doing.

So let us take the first one which is the syntax, the syntax is referred to as the study of interrelationship of science. So I come to the point where now we are looking at different signs and they are interrelated with each other so in the semiotic landscape you have heard of that a sign is signifying something else, so a sign is standing for something else. So there are many signs around us and they are in different forms they are indifferent media.

Right now we are currently only dealing with the visual signs so these signs are there in bits and pieces all around us, but as you have understand we have talked in many times this particular subject has its domain in linguistics it evolved from there. So say for example, let us take a example of a sentence so when you say a sentences, say Ragav is a good boy. So what you are doing you are having some smaller bits of science so Ragav stand for something else is done for something else, boy stands for something else.

So these are all smaller signs and then there is a interrelationship between these signs so this is exactly what syntax deal with. The form of different signs coming together and then making some structure so if you look at the several aspects of the syntax. So first aspect is the arrangement of elements, so it is basically you have various elements various sign elements which are there.

So you are bringing them together you are arranging it, so this is an act of arranging and that has an order, so a change in order when you are times will create a disruption in the form. So if I say Ragav is a good boy, there is a particular order of arranging these signs or arranging these elements if I make them interchange them if the relationship, is lost you will no longer be able to give a correct form to this interrelationship of science.

And as a next step the meaning will be different, so if I say boy is a Ragav, Ragav boy is, so I am rearranging these elements in a different form not in the right order. So what is it creating you are unable you are finding it difficult to understand the meaning why because the form itself is not correct. So that creates the formation of grammar, so if you remember in the formation of grammar.

And the formation of the grammar is based on certain rules and patterns, so if you remember in our very first class or in our introductory session we talked about that visual understanding or visual communication is as much part as, as a grammar itself. It also needs a structure it also needs a learning it needs an understanding. It also has a grammar in place there is an arrangement of elements, there is order of placing these elements, there are set patterns or rules for doing it.

If that is not done the meaning conveyance will be faulty or the form would be faulty, so if there is if there is an error in syntax, we call it syntactic errors or in syntactical error, you have heard of this term when you were learning grammar as language. You have heard of in syntactical error

where you are entertaining or the form is not correct. So that is the grammar part of it and it is rule driven as you understand it is ruled driven and there could be few errors associated with it.

The errors are many a time based on lack of proper arrangement so the kind of error, we get is the lack of arrangement. So I have already given you an example, where I have interchanged the elements and others and we have seen that there was a error coming out of that right. So it is so similarly in a visual arrangement, if you have not segregated or correctly put the forms together say you are designing a poster and in the poster the main topic is written in a smaller typeface or font size and say the date say the venue of that place is written in a bigger arrangement.

So there is a syntactical over error over here, the arrangement is not correct the order is not correct so there is a lack of arrangement, over here there is a sense of errors going to the order and placement. How you are doing so this, is an example how you might land up in an error when you are visually designing it. So there are various aspects of designing we talked about balance so we talked about the principles of design.

We have talked about elements of design in our forthcoming classes we will talk about few more principles related to this, so many are times when we are unable to arrange these things properly we may land up in a syntax error, another kind of error which we encounter in this kind of scenario is the lack of interrelationships. So how we are trying to establish interrelationship between different elements so in terms of language, it is more or less pretty simple and it is freed forward in terms of how it has to be arranged in case of spoken language or abstract language.

We have a set of rules where you know how to arrange words or phrases together to make a meaningful understanding but that has to be learnt very, very precisely when it comes for a visual composition or a visual communication that you are designing. There you have lot of different element and they always will have an interrelationship with each other, so if I have

three graphics there you have a flower, I have a son and I have a text version over here so these three will always have an interrelationship between each other.

And how you are arranging that in your in your figure and ground relationship, so you will have a background, you will have a foreground, you will have these three elements and they will create an arrangement. So if the interrelationship if the flower is not interrelated with the Sun and the text that you are writing there could be a lack of syntax and that may create some kind of disruption in understanding of the meaning. So this will be very clear as soon as we start talking about semantics.

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So if you look at the screen we are talking about the semantics now what the semantics deals with is the study of relationship between the science and the object to which they apply okay. So if you look at this particular diagram, here we have the interpreted and there. We have the representation to the object being represented by a particular sign object or by a sign or by a

signifier the object is represented by a signifier and the interpreted is looking at this representation.

So now if this representation is not understood by the interpreted in the correct fashion there will be a mismatch. So I will go back to the previous slide which has missed out here if you see the syntax acts in this domain where we have a representation, or the signifier over here or design and that sign is an expression which the interpreted is interpreting. So basically here the structure of this representation is very, very important.

So the interpreted is looking at the representation, is looking at the structure of this representation the interrelationship of different signs together they all making one sense, and this expression is being observed by the interpreting. So this is what is creating the syntax.

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Whereas if you look at the semantics now what is happening here the emphasis is more on the representation how that object, how the thing which is being signified, is being represented by

the signifier and not only that it is not about how that is being represented definitely it is important, but how the interpreting is making a judgment out of it, is making the meaning out of it. And that is only possible when we look at the interrelationship between the sign and the object, so we have imagined we have the image, we have these real tree and you are representing a real tree by an image, by a graphic.

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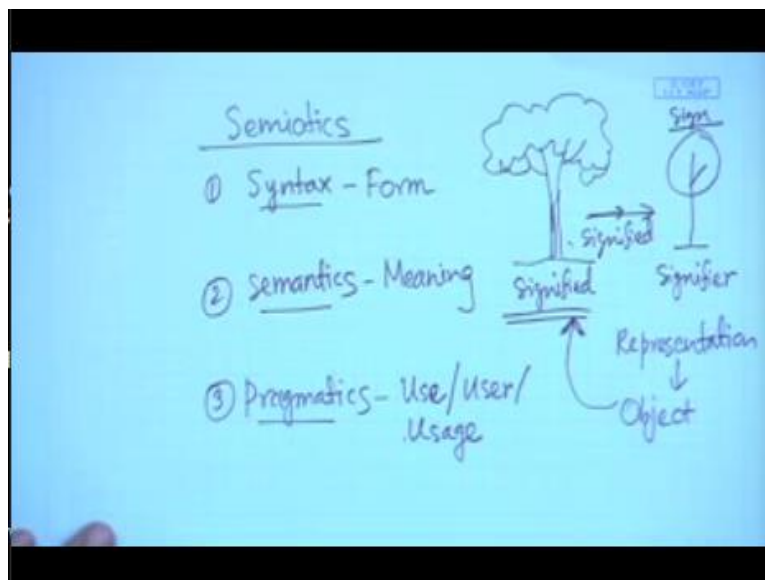
Say for example there is a real tree I am just having a very bad sketch over here, so this is a real tree that you have got and they is being signified by this, for example so I am representing so this is becoming my sign language for this and if I now ask you what kind of sign is this probably this is an iconic sign. So here it is so this is the signifier and this is getting signified obviously, this is also an image with the real signified is the real tree over here but we are trying to signify it by an image like this and what is happening over here is we are looking at the representation.

So we are looking at the representation and we are matching this representation with the object so basically we are looking, at the representation and making a judgment with the real tree and

hence we are making a meaning out of it. So if this sign was beyond recognition you are unable to make a meaning out of it there will be a break in communication. The first is the syntax so when I drew the picture I took help of elements and principles of design and that was a representation, representation of an object and v as an interpreter what we are doing.

We are analyzing the relationship between this object and the representation or the signifier and hence we try to make a meaning out of it, so now let us let us look at some of the important key aspects to this. So in this case the representation is very, very important that you understand how we are representing the signifier is of utmost importance to that that and very important thing for us to understand is this representation is taking help of certain signs and this sign is conveying the information or conveying message about my real object.

So one is the representation is important the sign is important the sign with the object is important this conveyance is important, so that creates the basis of the semantic approach and then the most important thing over here is the association of meaning. And the association of meaning is definitely based on experience and knowledge. So whenever we are associating a meaning with it as you can clearly understand it is based on knowledge or our past understanding so now you understand.

We talked about share intentions we talked about communities we talked about cultures we talked about the interrelationship between these agents over media so all these things come together why because this meaning is related to particular group of people. It is related to how we are growing up and experiencing our environment one is the environment and one is the culture in which we observe.

And you know rationalize our beam so this is a very, very crucial aspect where we are trying to understand how we make meaning of anything that we encounter we are vehicles, we are we are agents who are dependent on sign language for anything. We do for our communication for any

kind of interactions which is happening for our social structure for everything for that matter. We are relying on science and interrelationships of science objects, people agents again so all of these together comes into being and is creating meaning, so the meaning of the world that you have is based on nothing but these three things coming together.

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So now we look to look at some of the errors which are possible so the possible errors which are which could encounter because of semantic in the semantic domain is lack of knowledge. And the other error is based on expression so one thing is when you have a lack of knowledge or lack of understanding or lack of past experience as you may say there could be an error arising out of it.

So for example if I if we go back to this particular image example we have this is our object so this is the object we had and this is our sign so this is the sign we had so now if we see the possible error could be if I really do not have this knowledge of the object and we the one is we

really do not know how a tree works what a tree, is a tree has a canopy has a stem and is connected to the soil. So if I do not have a proper knowledge of this day I am showing this to a person who has never seen a tree or belongs to a place which is very arid it is in a desert arena in the Arctic region it is in Antarctica or Arctic region he has never seen a tree.

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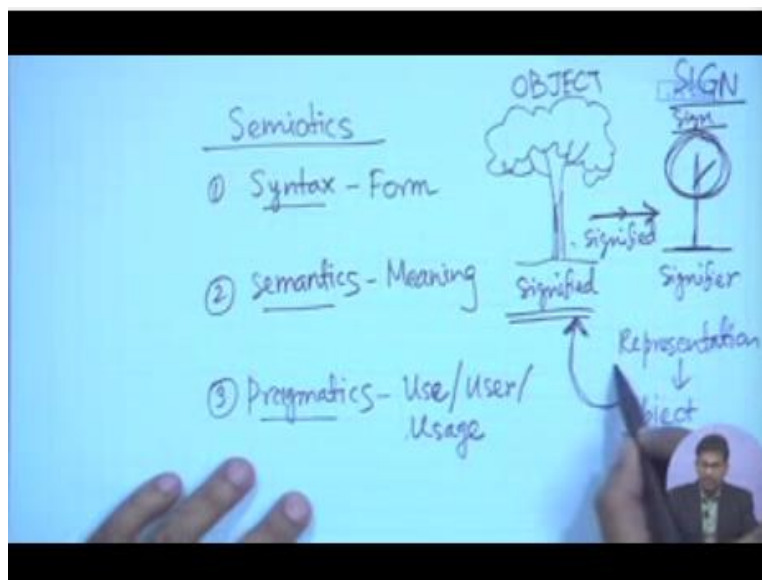
He does not have sufficient knowledge to make meaning out of it he will make a different meaning out of it so there is an error which will involve over here, so that is one kind of error another kind of error it is possible is related to the representation. It will where I am representing three in this fashion but the representation is not correct so as a designer we have to be very, very careful about these two aspects one whether we are involving sufficient knowledge of people and then doing the representation and the other if the representation itself is correct and if there is a gap between this what we encounter is known as a semantic gap or a semantic distance.

So many a times we encounter in an error which is the semantic distance so the meaning that your association associating with this particular sign is of greater gap the distance between them is huge so you are representing say a tree by this sign, but you are not understanding that this is free not even a plant you say, you think of this as a robot or something else any other objects there, is a big semantic gap there, is a meaning gap there is a meaning difference which is happening.

And this is how we kind of quantify many a time that the semantic difference or the semantic gap is big or the semantic gap is less so this is kind of error we encounter. Now we look at the third aspect of semiotic which is the pragmatic aspect and the pragmatic is looking at the relationship between the sign system as a whole and the user. So if you look at this the interpreting is there the object is where there presentation, is there or the signifier, is there and the observer observant is looking at the representation,

Looking at the expression and having the knowledge is making an interpretation of this but pragmatic look at all of it together, so it is looking at all of these things happening together from a usage scenario so it is just not enough to have a form of science and have interrelationship of science it is not enough to have the knowledge and understanding of the interpreting and look at this and interpret it, but another very, very crucial aspect which comes in semiotics is about its usage.

How we are using it what is the aspect of usage what is the relevance in our society that together create the whole understanding of semiotics or the sign system, so the sign system is working in an ecology in a in a society in an environment. Where it works otherwise that sign system will not work it does not have any significance there is no signifier and signified in that, so that is working in a user scenario and that has to be taken into account.

So what are the crucial aspects to it so this is definitely based on use it and the meaning in action, so basically this relates to something which you see in action. So the meaning as you understand but the knowledge the working knowledge, as you practice it as you see that thing happens in your culture in your society.

In your day-to-day life you gain that knowledge, so you see meaning in action you see meaning working and hence you develop further meaning for the knowledge about it. And go forward with it, so this is dependent on the grammar and meaning both and then see how it has worked in the past. So basically what is happening here you are looking at the syntax aspect you are looking at the semantic aspect both together and you see that has happened in past.

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You have learnt about it, there is a learning their socio cognitive aspect related to this and based on that you come to a judgment for this, so what are the errors which are possible over here so the error is again based on lack of experience or use if you have not seen it you news, if you are not experienced that there could be errors and that could be based on socio cognitive practices.

So there could be two kind of errors over here one is your, you do not have sufficient experience of its usage you land up in some kind of error at the same time when you have some kind of socio cognitive differences the social structure. The cognitive structure is very different then you have a difference in understanding of this, I will show you one example which will make it clear so I always cite this example of traffic light so now if we break it down from a syntax semantics and pragmatics point of view.

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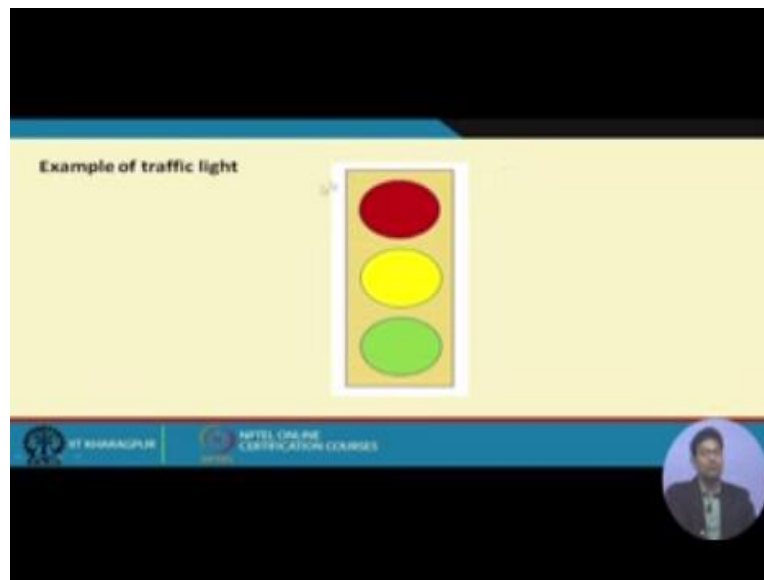
If I look at this red yellow green if we look at syntax in tax-wise you may say the radius on top, so red as a color is on top yellow as a color is in the center and grease and as a color is at the bottom and their circle so this is their structure the top middle bottom. And they are defined by some color, so this is your syntax you are still now just looking at some of the sign aspects and this arrangement that is all but, then comes the meaning you know then comes your knowledge and then comes your object with which you start relating this.

So you relate this with a traffic light and immediately start making a meaning or the red is for stop the amber is to get ready and the green is to for go, so this is the meaning associations something representing something else and you are looking at both of them and making a meeting. So that is the second part at the third part is the pragmatics, where you know that when

there is a red sign it is about danger crossing, when it is red crossing the road when it is red is of danger or there could be traffic violation and things like that.

When it is green you mean that there is no car and hence I should cross so this is something based on your uses of this particular sign vehicle, so this is how it works in our real world the whole semiotics aspect and syntax semantics and pragmatics together.

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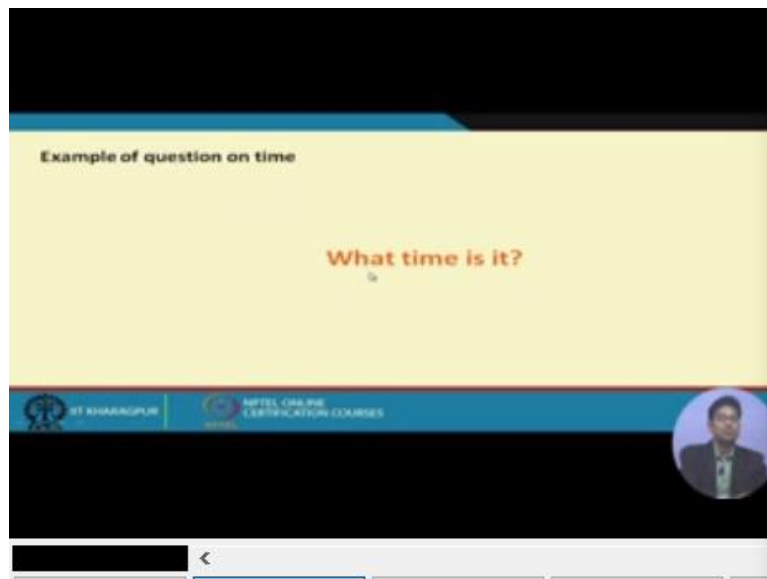
Let us take another example this is another example which is I would say for example the question about time so you say what time is it, so when you say what time is it the syntax. I expect is very simple you understand this is English language there are few words, what time is it? And there is a question mark. So a structuring of that in a particular fashion makes you understand that this is a meaningful sentence but what does it mean is something based on your knowledge that is something you have learnt.

So you understand that someone is asking you about time so this is something to do with time, time as we know as day and night 24 hours 365 days, whatever it is but it is something to do with that. And the third part pragmatics is something which you understand that when someone is asking something of this sort it is obligatory to answer, it is a courtesy to answer that okay I do not know the time or maybe 12 o clock or something like that.

So the usage aspect of it someone is asking maybe is trying to understand what time is it may be in a Josh maybe it is obligatory to answer these are the things which revolve around the pragmatics. so that brings us to the whole arena of semiotics and three aspects of semiotic. Thank you very much.