

Contemporary Issues In Philosophy Of Mind And Cognition
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Module No. # 01
Lecture No. # 31
Language, Representation and Meaning –2

Today, we are going to discuss Searle's notion of language and meaning. Language according to Searle is a biological phenomenon. It has evolved in this sense that, as you all know Searle presupposes two scientific theories: one is evolutionary biology and the other is the atomic theory of matter. Following this scientific presupposition Searle argues that intentionality is a pre linguistic feature whereas, language is a later **evolute**. Language is not prior to intentionality. In this sense Searle tries to talk about the concept of language and linguistic activities.

He tries to show that the language-world relationship is an intentional relationship; it is governed by the principle of intentionality; the intentional attitude of language use is seen as a kind of social phenomenon, language use is a kind of social activity. Now this social activity presupposes that there is a mind and this mind is intentional and the intentional feature of mind not only articulates the linguistic expressions, but also tries to show how meaning is embedded in the intentional structure of mental states.

It is in this connection that Searle's tries to tell us that the language-world relationship, the sense-reference relationship, the content and reference relationship are intentionally defined. Searle of course, tells us that this intentional connection between language and the world is a causal connection.

So, in this case one does not understand that the causal connection that Searle is talking about is like the causal connection that Fodor and Chomsky would talk about. Since Searle's talks about mental causations and these mental causations are internationalized in the case of biological naturalism, we need to see how Searle explains to us the language-world relationship.

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The slide features a dark blue header with the text 'Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Mind & Cognition' in yellow. Below the header, the title 'Searle On language' is centered in black. Underneath the title, a red sub-header reads '– Language from evolutionary point of view'. The main content is a quote in blue text: '“From evolutionary point of view there is an order of priority in the development of biological processes, so there is an order of priority in the development of intentional phenomena. In the development of language and meaning comes very late.” (Searle 1983)'. At the bottom left is the NPTEL logo, and at the bottom center is the text 'Prof. Ranjan K Panda, Department of Humanities & Social Science, IIT Bombay'. A small number '10' is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

In this context I would like to talk about Searle’s notion of language. From evolutionary point of view there is an order of priority. It is this priority that I was talking about: how intentionality evolves and then we find the evolution of language. Intentionality is prior to language, priority in the development of biological processes. So, there is an order of priority in the development of intentional phenomena.

If language is embedded in the structure of mental states or intentional states then, this structuring looks for a kind of logical priority or the structuring demands a kind of biological priority in order to show how intentionality helps in explaining the structure. In the development of language and meaning comes very late.

According to Searle human being is a linguistic being. Human being is a conscious being, a biological being. All these features of the individual human beings are something that is unique.

Intentionality is not unique in the case of a biological human being. The biological system produces intentional features. If that is the hypothesis then, all biological entities have intentionality. Intentionality is the intrinsic feature of consciousness, or as an intrinsic feature of human mind, is a common feature to all biological beings. But human intentionality is different from animal intentionality, from the intentionality of plants and insects. You would see that in our later lectures.

What is important today is to talk about that when we say that language and world are intentionally connected, we would just like to tell ourselves that this relationship presupposes intentionality.

In that sense we need to see how intentionality helps us in explaining the structure of mental states and its linguistic features and relationship with the world. Since meaning is the part of mind, according to Searle this relationship, the relationship between meaning and mind has to be understood very carefully. Precisely because, for him language is one of the basic institutions that human intentionality has formed and it is through the language or the linguistic content, the intentional content we relate how it is part of experience and understanding. Meaning is not there in the mind. I said meaning is related to experience and understanding and therefore, it is related to the mental life. There is an internal relationship found in the case of Searle's analysis of the meaning. In that context when we talk about linguistic activities, the activities which are characterized as the mental activities, what we try to show is that linguistic activities say for example, thinking, desiring, intending etcetera are part of experience and understanding.

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Analysis

- Biological development of language in association with mental life
- Linguistic activities are characterized as mental activities.
 - Experience & understanding

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In that sense there is an internal connection. Intentionality, as we have discussed earlier is a feature of directedness. We have also pointed out in the last session that, Searle talks about two different kinds of representations: the mental representation in one hand and

the linguistic representation in the other. But Searle tries to show us that language is connected, in a sense connected to the mind.

This connection as I said it is an intentional connection. To say that what kind of representation happens when talk about language use we say there is a linguistic representation. When we say that the structure of linguistic representation and the structure of mental states are connected and these structures are in some sense symmetrical in nature then that is precisely because the intentional content of these structures are same.

When we say I am thinking or the thought, a particular thought or a mental state like a desire to have a glass of water: this having a glass of water would talk about or the want to have glass of water would talk about, how this thought is being expressed in language. When I express this in language I certainly convey meaning to you. The expression conveys meaning to the hearer. If the contents are different then what I think and what I say will not match.

Due to the mismatch between the thinking and saying or expressing the desire there will be chaos. Searle tries to tell us that the content is expressed in language and this intentional content is a pre linguistic phenomenon and it is expressed in language. So, language for Searle is an institution. It is one of the institutions. There are several institutions like family is an institution, governance is another institution. Now all these institutions are formed by certain rules and Searle says that these are constitutive rules.

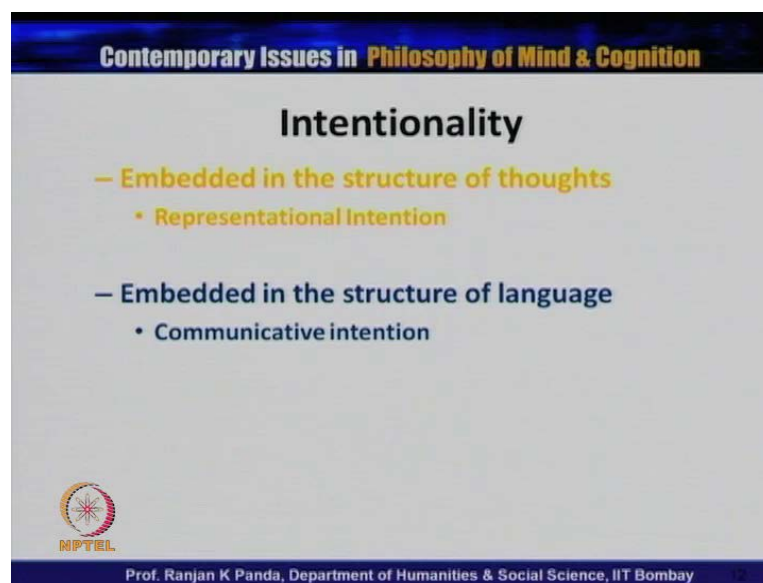
The constitutive rules have a kind of logical form that is x . X is defined as y in the context c . In other words, we try to see x as y in a particular context. I will come back to that point, when Searle's talks about two different kinds of rules that govern our linguistic activities: one is the constitutive rules and the other is the regulative rules. But, before that we need to be very clear that the realm of the mental and realm of the linguistic are two different realms. Searle therefore, talks about the communicative intention, the intention to share the meaning. That is, what is being intended by the speaker is different from the mere intention of expression.

There are two things one is, in the case of a linguistic representation. A mere linguistic representation minus communicative intention is something very insignificant when it talks about language use. Say for example, when I am walking on the street and there is

nobody around I just say something. If I say that I want a glass of water very loudly it will make no sense because I am not intending to communicate to somebody that I want a glass of water or rather I am just loudly speaking out my thought. But if there is somebody, there is a hearer around me or there is a possibility that somebody would hear my desire and I am feeling very thirsty and I also expect that he would response to my expression, then that kind of state of affairs will talk about what Searle calls a communicative intention.

The communicative intention and the representational intention are two different kinds of intentions. The intentionality which is embedded in the structure of thought or mind is a kind of intentionality which only has representational intention. It has a representational intention whereas; in the case of intention to communicate things would talk about the communicative intention. So, the intentionality operates in two different realms.

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So, there are two aspects of meaning intention. Communicating according to Searle is a matter of producing effect on one's hearer. But one can intend to represent something without caring at all about the effects of the hearer. This is a very significant remark where, Searle tries to tell us that the desire to communicate something is significant and it is significant in sense that it shows how I must behave in a social, in a public space. Whereas if I say that I am just thinking, I need not express my thought. A mere thinking would talk about a kind of intention which Searle's calls as the representation intentions,

where I am not really thinking of the possibility of saying certain things to others. I am ruling out the possibilities; I am just thinking. So, there that is also possible. But the moment I try to speak out my thoughts I am very much consciously involved in saying, but I am thinking and I must mean what I say.

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Two aspects of meaning intention

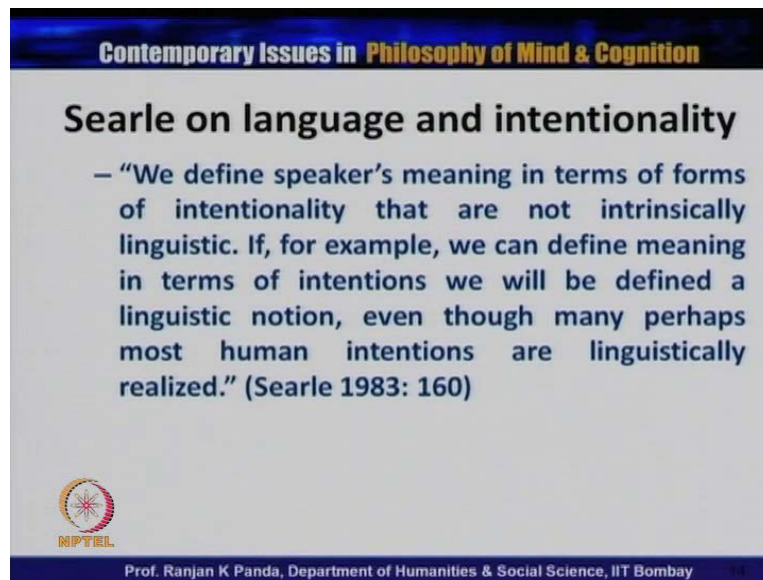
“Communicating is a matter of producing effect on one’s hearers but one can intend to represent something without caring at all about the effects of the hearer” (Searle 1983: 166)

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That connection between saying and meaning it is a very important intentional connection that Searle is referring to. Searle further says that we define speaker’s meaning in terms of forms of intentionality that are not intrinsically linguistic. If for example, we can define meaning in terms of intentions we will be defining a linguistic notion, even though many perhaps most human intentions are linguistically realized. All human intentions are linguistically realized. They are linguistically in the sense, when you talk about the realizations we must understand what a mental state is and what are the other mental states that it is connected to.

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The slide features a dark blue header with the text "Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Mind & Cognition" in white and yellow. Below the header, the title "Searle on language and intentionality" is displayed in bold black font. A quote in blue text reads: "We define speaker's meaning in terms of forms of intentionality that are not intrinsically linguistic. If, for example, we can define meaning in terms of intentions we will be defined a linguistic notion, even though many perhaps most human intentions are linguistically realized." (Searle 1983: 160). The NPTEL logo is positioned in the bottom left corner, and the footer contains the text "Prof. Ranjan K Panda, Department of Humanities & Social Science, IIT Bombay" in white on a dark blue background.

Say for an example I have a desire. This desire is connected to various other desires. This desire say desire one is connected to desire three or it is related to some kind of a belief. This is a kind of criss-crossing relationship and that kind of a network, what Searle means is, you might have seen in his book *The Intentionality- An essay in philosophy of a mind*, the book that I am referring to is this talks about the network of mental states. Searle makes a distinction between network and background.

Background is a non representational power or ability, a non representational mental ability. Whereas the mind or the mental life includes various mental states: various kinds of mental states though we mostly refer to desire, believes, intentions etcetera. But there are several other kinds of mental states which are intentionally connected to one another.

This intentional connection or whatever Searle calls there is a conceptual connection. In this network of mental states, I have already mentioned in my previous lectures that some mental states are unconscious mental states and some are conscious. Say for example, I am conscious of this desire to have a glass of water. If I am conscious of this and I am present not conscious of other kinds of desire I have, what Searle says is this that all the other desires that I am not conscious of now are potentially conscious mental states.

This idea that, to have desire and to express that desire and also believe that somebody would bring a glass of water, there is a possibility that somebody would bring me a glass

of water. I believe that there is a hearer who would hear and would listen to my expression and bring a glass of water to me. So, I believe, the speaker believes certain things. That is why he is intended to speak or express a desire.

So, the intention of the expressing the desire is something which talks about believes. There are several believes. I believe that there is a glass or there is a pot, and the hearer would go rush to the pot. Or there is a pond the hearer would rush to the pond fill the pot, fill the glass and bring it to me. So, there is hell of lot of know possibilities.

Possible believes are connected. So, there is a network of mental states. And one mental state is realized with relation to various other mental states. In that sense, the linguistic realisability is connected to the mental. As you remember Searle's basic hypothesis is that mental states are caused by brain processes and realized in brain processes.


So, whenever something is being caused that is where it also creates a kind of possibility for realizing that. So, Searle is very particular about this. Searle is very explicitly mentioning this to us.

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Mind and language

– “On this approach the philosophy of language is a branch of philosophy of mind. And in its most general form it amounts to the view that certain fundamental notions such as meaning are analyzable in terms of more psychological notion such as beliefs, desires, and intentions.” (Searle 1983: 161)

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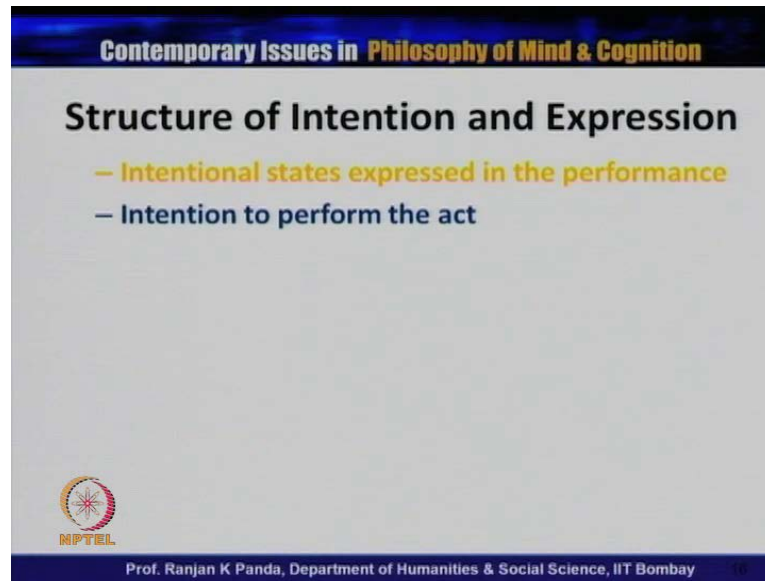
On this approach the philosophy of language is a branch of philosophy of mind. This is one segment we need to be a little clear about. When Searle wrote speech acts in late sixties, he made it very clear that philosophy of action is a branch of philosophy of language. And speech act is a special kind of act, is a special kind of action: to say

something is to perform an action. he is saying that philosophy of language is the branch philosophy branch of mind. So, he is connecting three things: action, language, mind. then one can read further into this quotation and in its most general form it amounts to the view that certain fundamental notions such as meaning are analyzable in terms of more psychological notion such as believes, desires and intentions.

So, meaning is not exclusively a kind of a social phenomenon. It is also related to the mind. Hence there are many psychological states that are involved and they are involved in producing the expression and realizing that. I did not talk about the background. The background is an ability, is a power to cause the representation. It is through background that the mind is able to represent things. So, mental states are representational in this way because there is a non representational ability.

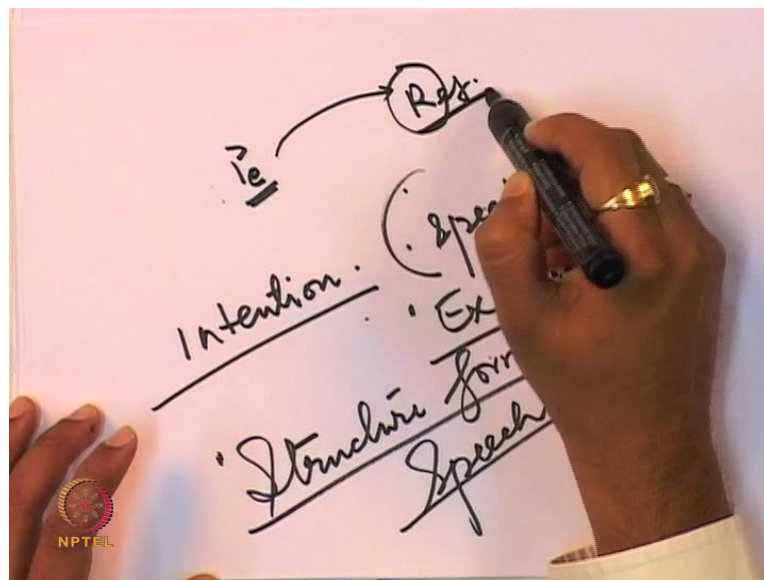
Background is a not in itself representational, but it makes representation possible. According to Searle this background capacity or ability is there in our head. He does not characterize it as a mentor. He says it is a kind of a biological ability; it is a kind of a dispositional ability. But I must tell you this that he is not a behaviorist: saying that mental states can be define in terms of dispositions. But he says it is there in every biological being the every power to represent certain thing; power to do certain things. It is that biological power, for Searle, is a kind of a non representational power which makes the representation possible. So, the possibility of forming the network of mental states or representational states is possible due to a background condition. Then Searle of course, says that background is not only physical, but there is a cultural background particularly in the intentionality book.

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Now let us further talk about the structure of intention and expressions. Intentional states expressed in the performance that is the intention to perform that. So, what is important for us today is that there is speaker intend to speak.

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So, the intention to speak something or intention to express something talks about how the structure is formed. So, there is an intentional structure formed here when we talk about the intentionality of saying and meaning it or performing a kind of speech act. When you talk about speech act or expressions we must say how these expressions are

intentionally structured. The intentional states are representational states and these representational states: say p is an intentional state and p will have some content in it, being an intentional state must have content. The content which expresses that it is about something. If p has an intentional content, it is that content which refers to the reference or which signifies that a reference or establishes a kind of a connection with the reference. So, in that sense there is a structure involved.

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The slide features a dark blue header with the text "Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Mind & Cognition" in yellow. Below the header, the title "Structural symmetry" is centered in bold black font. A quote in blue text reads: "The fact that condition of satisfaction of the expressed intentional states and the condition of speech act are identical suggests that the key of the problem of meaning is to see that in the performance of speech act the mind intentionally imposes the condition of satisfaction of mental states as the production of physical phenomena." Below the quote, the citation "(Searle 1983: 164)" is written in yellow. In the bottom left corner, there is a circular logo for NPTEL. At the bottom of the slide, a dark blue footer contains the text "Prof. Ranjan K Panda, Department of Humanities & Social Science, IIT Bombay" in white.

I have already talked about in the symmetry in the structure. Let me read out to you one of the quotations from Searle's Intentionality. He says "The fact that condition of satisfaction of the expressed intentional states and the condition of speech act are identical suggests that the key of the problem of meaning is to see that in the performance of speech act the mind intentionally imposes the condition of satisfaction of the mental states as the production of physical phenomena."

So, speaking is a physical activity. But the intention to speak, the very desire to express: when I say desire has a intentionality I must tell you this that when I use this term intentionality which is a very technical term I have already expressed earlier that intention; desires; believes all these mental states have intentionality. Intentionality is a feature; intentionality means directedness.

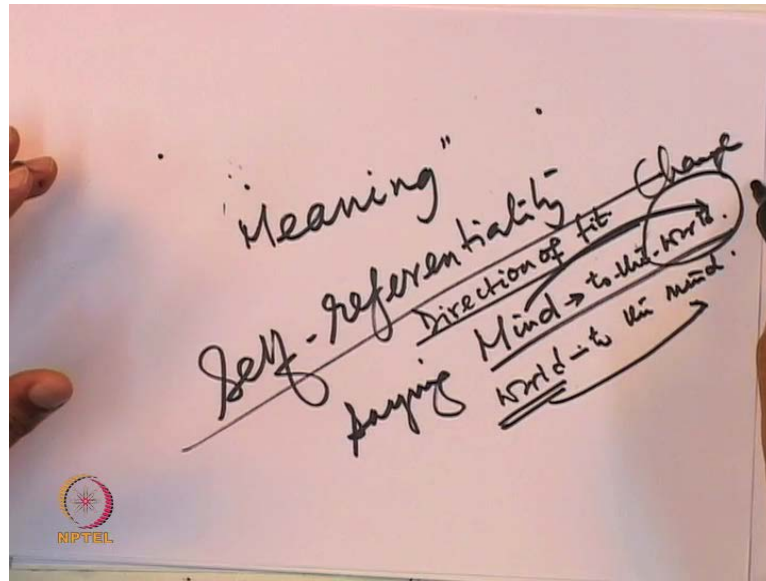
So, the desire to have water has a kind of directedness. When it is expressed, it is expressed is a kind of a physical action, but there is a mode in which a particular

statement is being made and Searle calls it the psychological mode. The psychological mode talks about the condition of satisfaction. So, there is not only a kind of a directedness involved between an expression or a proposition having a content, but there is also a kind of a psychological mode in which a particular statement is told is expressed to the hearer. And that is what brings, what Searle calls, the condition of satisfaction.

The condition of satisfaction talks about how statement is to be match. Say for example, if I am making a request then I would say 'please can you bring a glass of water to me' and if I give an order 'please bring me a glass of water' or I just say 'give me a glass of water' things like that. Now the tone, the way a statement is made according to Searle is very important to analysis the concept of meaning. Because there is an hearer who would respond to these statements; who is connected to what you are expecting,

If I feel that if I give an order the hearer will not listen then I need to be polite and make a kind of request: 'please'. **But if I am giving an order I have this sense of authority with me that yes:** say for example, in the court the judge says 'order'. It is enough to suggest that silence is to be maintained. It is that kind of authority. The speaker demands some kind of status or maintains some kind of status. And the authority is imposed in the expression or in the performing of a kind of an act: just hammering the table or saying 'order' is enough for judge to express that silence is to be maintained in the court room. So, in that sense we are imposing a kind of a condition of satisfaction. It is not just having directedness, but there is a condition of satisfaction involved in it.

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There is another notion which is being very typical to language use particularly, the notion of meaning is that the notion of self referentiality.

Searle says when you say certain things, saying would tell us how there is a kind of direction of fit from mind to the world called the mind to the world direction of fit and for it is a self referential kind of thing then there will be world to the mind.

Mind to the world and world to the mind. Bring a glass of water or please bring me a glass of water would reach to the hearer and there is a kind of a thing happening. It brings out some kind of change in the existing state of affairs: somebody rushes to the pot and gets me a glass of water. So, when the hearer fetches a glass of water for me there is a world to mind direction. There is an intentional connection between the world to the mind. This is what Searle calls self referential connection.

So, the direction fit is in two ways: one mind to the world and the other world to the mind.

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The slide features a dark blue header with the text 'Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Mind & Cognition' in white. Below the header, the title 'Self-referentiality' is centered in a large, bold, black font. Underneath the title, there are two main bullet points in black text: '- Self referentiality of Intentionality' and '- Linguistic structure of intention and social structure of intention'. The first bullet point has a sub-bullet in yellow text: '• Linguistic activities are conscious activities'. At the bottom left of the slide is the NPTEL logo, and at the bottom center is the text 'Prof. Ranjan K Panda, Department of Humanities & Social Science, IIT Bombay'.

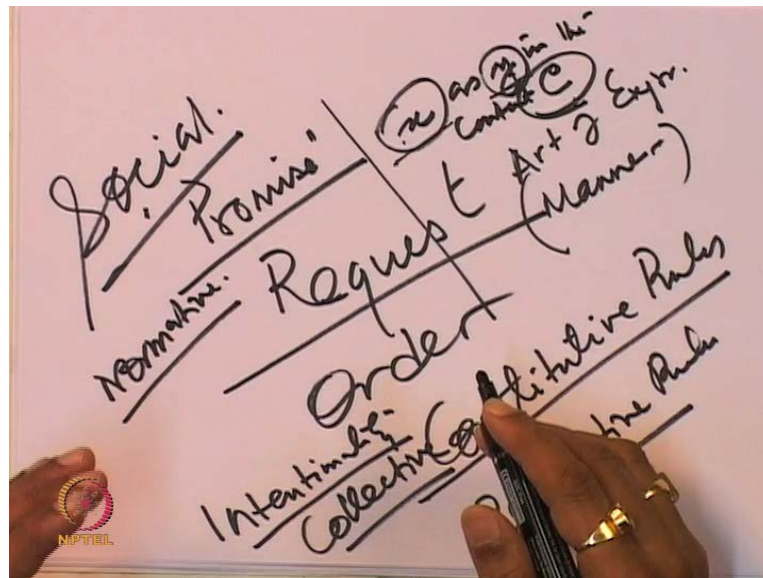
So, once that kind of intentional connections are possible then we talk about self referentiality of intentionality. Linguistic activities are conscious activities in this sense because they have been consciously realized. When you say you expect. When this expectation is fulfilled you have, what you call, satisfaction. We experience the satisfaction by consuming the glass of water and somebody just. That is what is being the case where linguistic activities are conscious activities, because you not only say something, but you also mean it and you realize what you have said.

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The slide features a dark blue header with the text 'Contemporary Issues in Philosophy of Mind & Cognition' in white. Below the header, the title 'Social structure of Meaning' is centered in a large, bold, black font. Underneath the title, there are two main bullet points in black text: '- Social meaning structure signifies the social institution of intentionality' and '- Linguistic rules are unconsciously followed'. The first bullet point has a sub-bullet in yellow text: '• Prelinguistic form of intentionality refers the background'. At the bottom left of the slide is the NPTEL logo, and at the bottom center is the text 'Prof. Ranjan K Panda, Department of Humanities & Social Science, IIT Bombay'.

But as I pointed out earlier there is also a kind of social structure in which meaning is placed. The social meaning structure signifies the social institution of intentionality: say for example, how a request is to be made.

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When you talk about request or order, all these requests has to be made in a particular way. There is a manner in which request is to be pointed out; there is a manner in which request is to be expressed. This art of expression or expressing something according to Searle is a rule governed activity. How are these rules formed? Searle talks about constitutive rules and regulative rules.

How the rules are formed: the basic thing is that Searle says a rule is formed with the help of intentionality. What kind of intentionality? A rule is not formed by only one individual's intentionality rather it is formed by collective intentionality.

Every condition, request or promise how a promise statement has to be made: this tells us that human intentionality is very fundamental and basic to the formation of constitutive rules which says x, where we understand x as y in the context c. A particular expression has to be understood in the form of say request or order in a particular context. That is the specialty and that can happen at the kind of social realm. It is that normative condition that makes an expression, request; that makes an expression, order.

The form of request, the form of order is normatively different. They are two different forms in the sense that the way they have been articulated is different. The way the request is being articulated; the way order is being articulated; the way promise is being articulated are in three different ways. The forms of these expressions are decided with the help of a collective intentionality. I will speak about collective intentionality and what kind of ontology the social will have: if language is a kind of social institution what kind of an ontology language use will have, that we will discuss. Searle has very profound things to tell us about the notion of social ontology.

But as far as language is concerned he says that social meaning structure signifies the social institution of intentionality. That is, how intentionalities operating in the social realm, that is important. The pre linguistic form of intentionality refers to the background: that is how the background is making things possible.

When you talk about rules and following the rules: once the rules are made than the rules are having certain power. That is the regulative power of the rules. All rules have certain regulative power. When an individual follows a rule he follows his unconsciously. Meaning thereby, Searle is very Wittgensteinian in this sense that I just follow the rule, that is to say this is how I use language; this is how promise is made; this is how the request is made. I have been a part of the social I know that this is how things are. That is the kind of unconsciously following the rules. It is natural that we express promise in this way or request in this way.

It is natural that we express promise in a particular manner and a request in another manner. In that sense Searle says rules are unconsciously followed. When we do not assume or interpret that there are rules in the mind and these rules are in unconscious mind and one is following the rules.

Searle thesis does not make that kind of clean. Rather he would tell you this, that we have learned the social etiquettes and so many varieties of language use being part of the linguistic community. This very fact that human beings have a linguistic form of life shows how these rules are formed.

The very fact that human beings have a linguistic form of life and they participate in various linguistics forms of life tells us how these rules are formed. When we explain

this, Searle says this question can be answered with references to the notion of collective intentionality.

How individuals together have formed culture; how these individuals together have formed many normative principles that make the culture possible. In that sense he is talking about a logical possibility of formulating various constitutive rules.

It is logically possible, precisely because the human consciousness tries to see things as something. X can be viewed as something in a particular context. This very possibility of imagining certain things in a particular context as something gives us an impression of making constitutive rules.

In that sense Searle's talks about how the constitutive rules are formed and language is expressed and used in a social context. We will talk more about it in the next session. Thank you.