

## Outlook on Linguistic Pragmatics

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**Abstract:** This study introduces the central concerns of pragmatics that studies language and culture-specific forms of language use. It illustrates not only cultural differences in language use and understanding but also how cultural, interpersonal context and culture-specific conventions contribute to meaning in actual language use. Pragmatics is a field of research which intersects with various topics. As regards meaning, it cannot but consider semantics. As regards rationality, it cannot but consider cognitive science and as regards cooperation, it cannot but consider philosophy. Thus, pragmatics needs linguistics and linguistics needs pragmatics. For a thorough investigation of topics researchers need to examine pragmatical rules and their purposes for the terms.

**Key words:** Pragmatics, semiotics, communication, linguistic phenomena, perspective

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### INTRODUCTION

Semiotics is the general study of signs. Semiotics investigates the structure and function of all processes in which signs are involved: communication between humans, the relations between social institutions. Semiotics is subdivided into two disciplines: object and meta-discipline. An object-discipline studies similarities and differences between sign processes. A meta-discipline analyses the methods and theories of all disciplines including the natural sciences and contributes to the philosophy of science. Since, semiotics assumes that the sign character is an important aspect of scientific approaches in the human social as well as natural sciences it is an interdisciplinary approach.

It is doubtful if signs have ever before been so vigorously studied by so many persons and from so many points of view. The army of investigators includes linguists, logicians, philosophers, psychologists, biologists, anthropologists, psychopathologists, aestheticians and sociologists (Morris, 1938).

The researcher of the Textbook on Pragmatics begins with Charles W. Morris (1901-1979), the founder of a general semiotics first outlined. Morris (1938)'s 'science of signs' is both broader and narrower than the scope of modern linguistic pragmatics. It is broader since pragmatics as conceived by Morris comprises branches of language studies which today fall into the domain of other disciplines of linguistics such as 'psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, neurolinguistics and much besides'

(Levinson, 1983). It is narrower insofar as Morris aims at a science of signs 'on a biological basis and specifically within the framework of the science of behavior' indebted to the positivist paradigm of psychological and social behaviorism.

As researchers have mentioned above that semiotics studies all kinds of sign processes. A sign process is generally called semiosis and a semiosis takes place if the following basic components are involved. They are: a sender, an addressee and a medium. A sender sends a message to an addressee. Before conveying the message the sender chooses a medium that connects him/her with the addressee and an appropriate code. From the code the sender selects a meaning, the signified that includes the intended message. The signified is correlated through the code with a corresponding signifier. Then researchers can say that the sender produces a sign that is a token of this signifier. The addressee receives the sign through the medium and perceives it as a token of the signifier which refers him/her to the signified on the basis of the code. The message is then constructed by the addressee with the help of the context in the given situation. That is researchers know the signs and what they signify; we know the conventions of the genre or what is acceptable and unacceptable. We know the codes.

Sometimes there is confusion and the code applied by the creator of a program isn't the code used by the members of the audience. In such cases, there is a bad communication. What makes things complicated is the

fact that generally speaking, people are not consciously aware of the rules and codes and cannot articulate them, although they respond to them.

According to the presence or absence of different components of the semiosis, the following three types of processes are defined:

- If in a semiosis, a sender produces a sign intentionally in order to make an addressee receive a message, the resulting sign is a communicative sign. When the addressee receives the message, this resulting process is called communication (Buyssens, 1943). Communication cannot occur without senders and addressees, signs and messages, media and contexts. Some semioticians accept in a wider definition that communication can take place without signifiers and signifieds (Posner, 1989). Communication especially the study of the way the components of semiosis influence each other and the sign process as a whole is a key concept of semiotics
- If in a semiosis, a code is involved, the sign is called a signifying sign and the resulting sign process is a signification. Signification can take place without senders and addressees an example would be the red spots on the skin taken by a doctor as a sign of measles
- If no code is involved in a semiosis, we call the sign an indicating sign and the resulting process an indication. Indication can take place without signifiers and signified and without a sender and addressee but not without signs and messages, recipients, media and contexts. An example of senderless sign processes without a code and the addressee as a simple recipient is when a scratching noise in a conference room is taken by the audience as a sign of the microphone being in operation

Indication is the simplest and basic type of semiosis in humans and primates because it can be realized with a minimal number of components. Indicating and signifying signs also play a role together with communicative signs in most complex sign processes such as oral and written verbal interaction.

Sign process, according to Morris (1938), involves three main factors: "that which acts as a sign (The sign vehicle) that which the sign refers to (the designatum) and that effect on some interpreter in virtue of which the thing in question is a sign to that interpreter" (the interpretant).

Based on this triad, Morris defines semiotics as a field of study of the following three domains corresponding to three well-known branches of modern linguistics:

- Syntax (syntactics), the study of the relation between sign vehicles
- Semantics, the study of the relations between sign vehicles and their designata
- Pragmatics, the study of the relation between sign vehicles and their interpreters (Posner, 1989)

When Morris conceived the triadic subdivision of semiotics into syntactics, semantics and pragmatics, he was clearly influenced by Peirce. Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914) is recognized as the founder of the modern theory of signs or theoretical semiotics. Peirce argued that interpreters have to supply part of the meanings of signs. He wrote that a sign "is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity". This is different from Saussure's ideas in which linguistics is a branch of semiology. Peirce considered semiotics important because as he put it, "this universe is perfused with signs if it is not composed exclusively of signs". This belief underlies the rise of four traditions that contributed to modern semiotics: semantics and the philosophy of the language, modern logic rhetoric and hermeneutics. Thus, semiotics became a meta-science in competition with established disciplines such as biology, psychology and medicine on the one hand and literary criticism, history of art and music on the other. Let us summarize briefly of what we have tried to cover so far concerning semiotics:

- Semiotics is concerned with how meaning is created and conveyed in texts
- The focus of semiotics is the signs found in texts. Signs are understood to be combinations of signifiers and signifieds
- Because nothing has meaning in itself, the relationships that exist among signs are crucial

It is the ways in which words are combined that determine what they mean. Language is a social institution that tells how words are to be used; speaking is an individual act based on language.

Furthermore researchers would like to make some review on pragmatics and its interesting topics such deixis, implicature, presupposition, speech acts.

Pragmatics is one component of the study of human language and therefore it can be described as a branch of the academic discipline of linguistics. It has emerged relatively recently, certainly within the last half century, but is now an important area that continues to expand and develop. Concepts, theories and approaches developed within pragmatics are being used in many other areas: both in other branches of linguistics such as

sociolinguistics, stylistics and psycholinguistics and in different disciplines such as artificial intelligence, clinical psychology and law. Pragmatics is frequently conceptualized as the science of language use, the study of context-dependent meaning and the study of speaker-intended meaning, presupposing the existence of language, language user and context on the one hand and context-independent meaning in the other. The majority of conceptualizations pay tribute to Charles Morris (1938)'s definition as "the study of the relation of signs to interpreters" and to Austin (1971)'s differentiation between constative and performative, foregrounding the performance of communicative action and the effects the uttering of words may have. Against this background, pragmatics is considered to be the study of invisible meaning (Yule, 1996), the science of the unsaid (Mey, 1993), the study of meaning as it "emerges in language use" (Marmaridou and Sophia, 2000) and the study of linguistic acts and communicative action and their appropriateness (Bublitz and Wolfram, 2009; Van Dijk, 2008; Fetzer, 2004). Pragmaticists have concerned themselves with all these different types of context-dependent meaning.

It is perhaps not hard to see how pragmatics could have become identified in some minds as an attempt to study performance. It emphasizes the importance of contextual as well as linguistic factors in meaning.

An abstract characterization will place emphasis on pragmatics either as a 'component' of linguistics (like phonology, syntax and semantics) or as a 'perspective' pervading the components and giving them a pragmatic 'accent'.

A practical characterization of the tasks and functions of pragmatics takes its point of departure in the traditional problems that linguistic research has grappled with over the years and for which pragmatics provides a solution.

Many types of topics simply happened to become part of the field of pragmatics. The most common shorthand definition of pragmatics as the study of how language is used can easily be extended in such a way as to include everything that linguists can possibly deal with. Pragmatics sometimes looks like a repository of extremely interesting but separable topics such as deixis, implicature, presupposition and speech acts. More often than not, theoretical unity is not provided in spite of the many points of contact between these various topics. Thus, speech act rules are frequently specific applications of the more general conversational maxims. Grice (1975)'s account of conversational implicatures and Searle (1975)'s definition of indirect speech acts are very similar. Moreover in his account of the 'illocutionary derivation'

needed to arrive at the meaning of an indirect speech act, Searle makes explicit reference to the principles of conversational cooperation. Furthermore, there is a fundamental sense in which background information and presupposition are synonymous, though the latter acquired a number of more restricted meanings. And one of the main early definitions of presuppositions advanced in the literature, crucially depends on functions of language which are generally discussed in terms of speech acts.

It is a good idea to be familiar with the nature of linguistic phenomena and the types of issue they raise. In addition, it is important at this early stage to be familiar with the relevant linguistic phenomena because they tell us a lot about what pragmatics is and what it does. That is they constitute the central topics in pragmatics or the core types of data in need of explanation by pragmatic theories.

## DEIXIS

This is a category of expressions whose purpose is to link uses of language to the context in which they occur. They are so common in language that researchers have necessarily come across many such examples already. Consider the effects of the word in *italics* in each of the following three examples:

- I am pleased to see you
- William met Martha yesterday

In each case researchers need to fill in some information from the context of utterance in order to understand exactly what is being communicated. Also in each case the italicized word indicates how this extra information can be found or points to some aspect of the context that is relevant to interpretation. Words of this type belong to a large and diverse category of linguistic expressions known as 'deictic' expressions. The linguistic phenomenon as whole is known as 'deixis'.

First example includes two examples of 'person deixis'. The personal pronouns are prime examples of this type of expression. The semantics of the language may specify that I refers to the speaker and you to the hearer, but we are dependent on the specifics of individual context to establish who those individuals are on any particular occasion. Without some semantic knowledge of the language we wouldn't be able to explain the difference in meaning between I and you but without some pragmatic knowledge of context we would never be able to know who is being referred to. In fact many ways of referring to people, other than the most obviously deictic personal pronouns have deictic elements to them.

The word 'yesterday' in the second example is an example of 'time deixis'. Again, researchers know something about the meaning of yesterday simply because we are speakers of English but researchers need information about the context for any particular use of the word researchers can be certain exactly what day it refers to. There are many other words and phrases in English whose primary meaning is a time deictic one, for instance: tomorrow, next week on Tuesday. There are other ways of indicating how an event under discussion relates to the moment of speaking perhaps most strikingly through the use of grammatical tense but only particulars of context can help us to decide what actual times or what times relative to the moment of speaking are involved.

### **IMPLICATURE**

The relevance of the analysis of implicature to pragmatics is twofold. First, implicature studies account for the further processing of information that has been encoded by the speaker based on his/her presuppositions. Second in doing the latter, they eventually recognize the contribution implicature makes to the update of the utterance-discourse context.

From the analytic standpoint, the explanatory powers of presupposition and implicature are inherently complementary, shedding light on both the speaker and the hearer side of the speech act formation. They are suited to cover in combination, the whole process of encoding messages by speakers and decoding them by their hearers. This process is essentially a continuum, where making a presupposition paves the way for the utterance before it takes on a linguistic form in which the presupposition is lexically or non-lexically salient. From that point on i.e., the point of making the utterance by the speaker, the recovery of the implicatures by the hearer may begin of course if the hearer senses a prompt to search for it/them. The inference of the implicatures, whether in accordance with the speaker's expectations or not, finalizes the entire process, thus updating the status of the interaction and creating a new contextual basis on which to build presuppositions for further utterances in the exchange. The cycle in question corroborates the dynamic view of context and endorses the intrinsic relativity of the micro-macro dichotomy. While the update takes place, technically speaking, 'within the utterance', its effect is on the prospective discourse. Delving deeper, implicatures created within the boundaries of the utterance are often 'returned to' or 'readdressed' purposefully later on in the unfolding discourse.

### **PRESUPPOSITION**

Presupposition can be defined as a mechanism whereby the speaker addresses a body of language and

experience involving both linguistic and non-linguistic contexts which he/she assumes to be common to him/herself and the hearer. The assumption of the existence of the shared knowledge may cause the speaker not to grammaticalize, it in the utterance. This characterization takes presupposition to be a phenomenon lying at several intersections: the encoded and the assumed, the semantic and the pragmatic, the linguistic and the non-linguistic.

Presupposition comes in contact with deixis on the plane of its partial anchoring in lexical and structural forms. However, since many instances of presupposition can only be approached with reference to (non-linguistic) context, presupposition also reaches out in the direction of the implicit, constituting in a sense, a shared knowledge prerequisite for communicating messages whose final destination is their inference by the hearer. Hence, its feasible combination with the apparatus of implicature and altogether, its relevance to the hierarchy of micropragmatic analysis which derives its output from both accumulation and interaction of descriptions offered by the individual conceptual tools. As one of the latter, presupposition targets the communicative act at the stage where it develops 'upwards' from the lexicogrammatical coding of context to its further abstraction and elaboration by the speaker with a view to producing a speech act. Throughout this stage, the speaker 'decorates' the deictic framework of the utterance with instantiations of knowledge shared by the speaker and the hearer with regard to all entities indexed, referred to or implied in the utterance.

### **SPEECH ACT**

The three brief subsections above have shown that deixis, presupposition and implicature make their distinctive micro pragmatic contributions to understanding how an utterance is built what its referents are and how they are encoded, what assumptions are made before the utterance is produced, what effects can be expected after it has been produced and what inferential processes determine these effects. They partake in the process of enacting goals of the utterance, from the speaker's intention to realize its envisaged function via application of specific indicators of force to the hearer's successful recognition of this function and its results. A procedure this complex needs a controlling, 'umbrella' parameter of description. It needs a conceptual tool that is able to cover both speaker and hearer related aspects of the utterance function and while doing so, draw upon and thus systematize the particular contributions from deixis, presupposition and implicature

in order to make them fit for macropragmatic work at the discourse level. The concept of the speech act seems an excellent theoretical candidate to take up this task.

The classificatory, controlling power of the speech act is further reflected in its network of felicity conditions, i.e., the conditions that underlie a successful, logical, 'felicitous' production of different acts. For example, a speaker cannot make a successful order if he or she does not sincerely want the order to be followed or if he or she deems the hearer incapable of following it. These two felicity conditions are excellent illustrations of the connection that holds between the concept of the speech act and the other 'micropragmatic' concepts a relation we have postulated at the beginning of this subsection. The speaker's awareness of cognitive and social context obtaining at the moment of producing a speech act gives rise to pragmatic presuppositions underlying the utterance that contains this act. Then, once the act is accomplished, the speaker's presuppositions can be assessed against the effectiveness of implicatures they helped to create.

### CONCLUSION

Neither general pragmatics nor linguistic pragmatics examine its objects of investigation in isolation but rather focus on their conditions of use, the connectedness with their surroundings and the necessary and sufficient conditions which assign the object and make it count as that object. While general pragmatics concentrates on the analysis of these fundamental premises of practical action, identifying their necessary and sufficient conditions, linguistic pragmatics establishes the explicit connection between those foundations and their language-specific and language-use specific constraints and requirements.

Pragmatics is more of a perspective towards an object under investigation than the examination of the object as such. For this reason, it needs to touch on and interface with neighboring disciplines in particular philosophy, cognitive science, neuroscience, linguistics and the social sciences. In spite of the diversity of the

field, the key research question of pragmatics is concerned with communicative action particularly with the expression and interpretation of meanings in context. To tackle that question felicitously, pragmatics needs to accommodate extra-linguistic world knowledge, cultural and social stereotypes and situation of discourse on the one hand and word meaning, sentence structure and the cognitive system, especially inference and abduction on the other.

One of the tasks of pragmatics is to explain how the same content is expressed differently in different (cultural, religious, professional) contexts. Often such contexts will be linguistically different as is the case from language community to language community.

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