

General Notions of Pragmatics and the Spheres of Pragmatic Competence

Urinboyeva Guluzro Dushayevna

Teacher, Andijan state foreign languages institute,
Department of theoretical aspects of english language

Annotation. This article is devoted to the problems of Pragmatic competence which is a subfield of linguistics and semiotics that studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning. It also discusses pragmatic competence in Modern English.

Key words: pragmatics, meaning, semantics, pragmatic competence, approach.

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics and semiotics that studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning. Pragmatics encompasses speech act theory, conversational implicature, talk in interaction and other approaches to language behavior in philosophy, sociology, linguistics and anthropology.

Unlike semantics, which examines meaning that is conventional or "coded" in a given language, pragmatics studies how the transmission of meaning depends not only on structural and linguistic knowledge (for example, grammar, lexicon) of the speaker and listener, but also on the context of the utterance, any pre-existing knowledge about those involved, the inferred intent of the speaker, and other factors. In this respect, pragmatics explains how language users are able to overcome apparent ambiguity, since meaning relies on the manner, place, time etc. of an utterance. [1, 63]

Pragmatics is the study of the aspects of meaning and language use that are dependent on the speaker, the addressee and other features of the context of utterance. For example in Uzbek: *Rangsiz yashil g'oyalalar darg'azab uxlashmoqda*. This example was written by Chomskiy, he used this pragmatics in his speech and he proved that it was a real pragmatics.

Meaning seems at once the most obvious feature of language and the most obscure aspect to study. It is obvious because it is what we use language for—to communicate with each other, to convey 'what we mean' effectively. But the steps in understanding something said to us in a language in which we are fluent are so rapid, so transparent, that we have little conscious feel for the principles and knowledge which underlie this communicative ability.

Questions of 'semantics' are an important part of the study of linguistic structure. They encompass several different investigations: how each language provides words and idioms for fundamental concepts and ideas (lexical semantics), how the parts of a sentence are integrated into the basis for understanding its meaning (compositional semantics), and how our assessment of what someone means on a particular occasion depends not only on what is actually said but also on aspects of the context of its saying and an assessment of the information and beliefs we share with the speaker. [1, 79]

Research in these areas reveals principles and systems which have many applications. The study of lexical (word) semantics and the conceptual distinctions implicit in the vocabulary of a language improves dictionaries which enable speakers of a language to extend their knowledge of its stock of words. It also improves materials which help those acquiring a second language through instruction. Studying the rules governing the composition of word meanings into sentence meanings and larger discourses allows us to build computer systems which can interact with their users in more naturalistic language. Investigating how our understanding of what is said is influenced by our individual and cultural assumptions and experience, which are much less visible than what is explicitly said, can help make us more aware and effective communicators.

The result of all of these (sometimes very abstract) investigations is a deeper understanding and appreciation of the complexity and expressive elegance of particular languages and the uniquely human system of linguistic communication. We can appreciate how someone can mean more than they 'strictly speaking' say by considering the same thing said in two different contexts. Consider two people, Pat and Chris,

who are getting to know each other on a first date. If Chris says to Pat at the end of the evening, "I like you a lot.", Pat will likely feel good about the situation. But imagine that Pat and Chris have been dating for some weeks, and Pat asks, "Do you love me?" Now if Chris says, "I like you a lot," the reaction will likely be quite different, as Chris' statement is taken as a negative answer! it is also a good example for pragmatics.

The difference does not come from the content of what is said but from the operation of a general pragmatic principle: When evaluating something on a scale of values, putting it at a certain point on the scale implies that all the higher values on the scale are inappropriate. It is our background assessment that positive feeling is ranked on a scale with 'love' higher than "like" which makes Chris' reply in the second context convey "No, don't love you." We apply this scalar principle so automatically that it is easy to overlook the fundamental pragmatic difference between what is actually said and what is implied by the saying of it.

A close examination of most words reveals that they have many different senses and the rules which combine them into sentence meanings will frequently yield several possibilities for interpretation. Usually we resolve potential ambiguity unconsciously—unless someone carefully constructs a joke which turns on an ambiguity. Consider for example this joke, taken from Douglas Adams' *The hitchhiker's guide to the galaxy*. Ford and Arthur, are stowaways on a space ship. [2, 91]

Ford: You should prepare yourself for the jump into hyperspace; it's unpleasantly like being drunk.

Arthur: What's so unpleasant about being drunk?

Ford: Just ask a glass of water.

The passage turns on the ambiguity of the word 'drunk', which can be an adjective, meaning 'affected by alcohol', or the passive form of the verb 'drink'. Arthur takes Ford as intending the first sense of 'drunk'—with good reason: he's unlikely to mean that someone would drink him. But Ford reveals that the bizarre interpretation is what he intends. The art of the image is the metaphorical treatment of a person as a liquid; the joke turns on the sleight of hand which makes our semantic interpreter lean in one direction before pulling us back in an unexpected way with a disambiguation.

These examples illustrate our semantic and pragmatic abilities in action. The goal of linguistic research into meaning is to illuminate the processes and knowledge involved.

In linguistics, pragmatic competence is the ability to use language effectively in a contextually appropriate fashion. Pragmatic competence is a fundamental aspect of a more general communicative competence.

The ability to understand another speaker's intended meaning is called pragmatic competence. For example: "Kumushni ertaga kinoga olib boraman" in this sentence we can understand that the speaker promises to take Kumush to the cinema. From the intonation we can realize that this sentence should be like *Kumushni ertaga kinoga olib borishga va 'da beraman*.

In Acquisition in Inter-language Pragmatics, linguist Anne Barron offers this more expansive definition: "pragmatic competence . . . is understood as the knowledge of the linguistic resources available in a given language for realizing particular illocutions, knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts, and finally, knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular language's linguistic resources."

The term pragmatic competence was introduced by sociolinguist Jenny Thomas in 1983 in the article "Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure". In that article she defined pragmatic competence as "the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context." [3, 209] For example:

I say: I want you to do X.

I think of it as some thing that will be good for me.

I don't know whether you well do it.

I say this because I want to cause you to do it.

In Uzbek:

Men demoqchiman: Men sening X ni bajarishingni istayman.

Men o'ylaymanki, buning bajarilishi mening uchun yaxshi.

Men bilmaymanki, sen buni bajarasanmi?!

Men buni aytayotibmanki, seni ushbuni bajarishga majbur qilmoqchiman.

"A speaker's 'linguistic competence' would be made up of grammatical competence ('abstract' or decontextualized knowledge of intonation, phonology, syntax, semantics, etc.) and pragmatic competence (the

ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context). This parallels Leech's division of linguistics into 'grammar' and 'pragmatics' (the use of language in a goal-oriented speech situation in which the speaker is using language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of the hearer." [3, 224]

"Intrinsic to this decision-making process are several principles that concur to define the nature of pragmatic competence. In particular, individuals make choices and build strategies based on some of the unique properties of pragmatic/communicative competence, such as:

- variability: the property of communication that defines the range of communicative possibilities, among which is formulating communicative choices;
- negotiability: the possibility of making choices based on flexible strategies;
- adaptability; the ability to modulate and regulate communicative choices in relation to the communicative context;
- salience: the degree of awareness reached by communicative choices;
- indeterminacy: the possibility to re-negotiate pragmatic choices as the interaction unfolds in order to fulfill communicative intentions;
- dynamicity: development of the communicative interaction in time."

Chomsky accepts that language is used purposefully; indeed, in later writings he introduced the term pragmatic competence—knowledge of how language is related to the situation in which it is used. Pragmatic competence 'places language in the institutional setting of its use, relating intentions and purposes to the linguistic means at hand'. As well as knowing the structure of a language, we have to know how to use it. There is little point in knowing the structure of:

Can you lift that box?

if you can't decide whether the speaker wants to discover how strong you are (a question) or wants you to move the box (a request).

"It may be possible to have grammatical competence without pragmatic competence. A schoolboy in a Tom Sharpe novel *Vintage Stuff* takes everything that is said literally; when asked to turn over a new leaf, he digs up the headmaster's camellias. But knowledge of language use is different from knowledge of language itself; pragmatic competence is not linguistic competence. The description of grammatical competence explains how the speaker knows that:

Why are you making such a noise?

is a possible sentence of English, and that

Why you are making such a noise.

is not. It is the province of pragmatic competence to explain whether the speaker who says:

Why are you making such a noise?

is requesting someone to stop, or is asking a genuine question out of curiosity, or is muttering a sotto voce comment." Pragmatic Competence refers to the ability to use language appropriately in different social situations. It is true to say that there is no correct way to use language; however, we can certainly define what appropriate use of language in different circumstances is. What do we mean by different circumstances?

Below are some ways to differentiate circumstances:

- ❖ Purposes for communicating, often referred to as functions, for example, inviting, apologizing
- ❖ Relative status of those communicating
- ❖ Topic area about which participants are communicating, for example, general, business, computing, medicine
- ❖ Situation, which refers to a physical location, for example, in a bank, at the airport, in a restaurant.

To communicate appropriately in these circumstances, whether using spoken or written language, we use an appropriate register, which may refer to level of formality, for example, 'Give me the book!', 'Would you mind giving me the book?' Register also refers to lexis in specific fields, for example, jargon. Another example in Uzbek: the interrogative sentence "Dars qilmaysanmi?" from its pronunciation can mean various circumstances: demand, requirement, warning, proposal, inviting and others. «*Dars qilmaysanmi, deb so'rayapman (sendan)*»; «*Dars qilmaysanmi? Buni sendan talab qilaman*» (teacher's speech); «*Dars qilmaysanmi? Seni ogohlantiryapman*»; «*Dars qilmaysanmi? (kel, birgalikda dars qilishga taklif qilyapman)*».

So, pragmatic competence is ‘the ability to use language appropriately in a social context’. [4, 84] It is the key to effective communication in a second language. While communicative competence and grammatical competence are explicitly taught and developed in the classroom, developing pragmatic competence is often overlooked. For example: in pragmatics we understand the meaning of the sentence without illocutinary words. Without these words we should understand the real meaning of the sentence and the speaker’s point of view. These words can be: *invitation, boasting, demand, threat, command, order, advice, promise, humiliation, scolding* and others.

«O’ldiraman!».

«Ishni bajaring»

«Homiylik ko’rsataman»;

«Tug’ilgan kuning bilan»

«Bu haqiqat».

However, it is actually the skill which native speakers subconsciously use to define a non-native speaker as a successful communicator...and, hence, as someone they would like to talk to, help, be friends with and even hire.

References

1. NIEZGODA, K., RÖVER, C. ‘Pragmatic and grammatical awareness.’ In: Rose, K. R., Kasper, G. (eds) Pragmatics in Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 63-79, ISBN: 0-521-00858-1.
2. Thomas, J. (1983). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure, Applied Linguistics, 4(2), pp. 91-112
3. Ellis, R. (2005). Principles of instructed language learning. System 33/2, pp. 209–224.
4. Yule, G. (1996). Pragmatics. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 84-92.
5. N.M. Pazilova. “THE CONNECTION OF PRAGMATICS WITH STYLISTICS”. Journal of Pedagogical Inventions and Practices. Volume 7, April. 2022.
6. N.M. Pazilova “INVESTIGATION OF LEXICAL BORROWING AS A TOPIC FOR GENERAL LINGUISTICS”. Илм-фан ва таълим – мамлакат тараққиётининг муҳим омили мавзусида республика илмий-амалий анжуман материаллари. З.М. Бобур номидаги Андижон давлат университетининг 90 йиллигига бағишланади.
7. N.M. Pazilova. “INVESTIGATING UZBEK AND ENGLISH METAPHORS IN COMPARISON”. The 3rd online international conference on “Current issues of modern linguistics and innovative approaches in foreign language teaching” organized by the English Department, Foreign languages Faculty, Fergana State University. May 25, 2022.
8. N.M. Pazilova. “THE ROLE OF SEMANTICS IN GENERATIVE AND COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS”. The 3rd online international conference on “Current issues of modern linguistics and innovative approaches in foreign language teaching” organized by the English Department, Foreign languages Faculty, Fergana State University. May 25, 2022.