Language is not an abstract construction of the learned, or of dictionary makers, but is something arising out of the work, needs, ties, joys, affections, tastes of long generations of humanity, and has its basses, literal and low, close to the ground.

Language Use in Context——A Course in Pragmatics

语用学教程

杨潮光 /编著

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— A Course in Pragmatics

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教程简介

20世纪80年代，语用学作为一门崭新的语言学研究学科率先在欧美等国出现，发展迅速，倍受关注，并于上世纪末引入我国。目前国内一些高校先后为英语本科的高年级学生和研究生开设了该课程。所用教材大多引进原版，部分教材为北京、上海、广州等地的教授学者翻译或编写的语用学教程。

本教程是编者自1981年以来，在对外经济贸易大学和其他大学进行语言学教学和研究以及过去五年来为研究生开设语用学教学实践的基础上编写的。

本书从宏观的功能派语言学和社会语言学角度，阐释语言的实际运用，不同于迄今为止出版的各类语用学教材，因此具有如下鲜明特点：

（1）语用学是研究语言和语境关系的一门学科，它研究和阐述语言使用者如何把语言和语境搭配成得体的言语进行交流的行为。语境是正确开展语言交流的基础，是任何语言交流者都必须考虑的要素。在确定了‘说什么’之后，‘什么时候’、‘在哪里’、‘跟什么人’、‘用什么形式’、‘怎么说’等都要受语境的制约，甚至‘说什么’本身也与语境有关，可以说语境是语言交流的出发点，是语言交流得体与否的限定因素。因此，编者认为把语言使用者的各种语境和语言的具体运用结合起来，宏观地分析和探究语言运用是客观和可行的。本书正是根据这一思路编

写出来的。

（2）编者还认为 MAK Halliday 等人编写的《语言科学和语言教学》为语用学的发展提供了重要的理论根据。M. Gregory 等人提出的‘交际语言学模式’则提供了理论基础。因此，运用这些理论对言语行为理论、会话合作原则、礼貌原则和策略及话语分析等进行研究更合逻辑，更有助于推进语用学理论的发展。所以本书比较详尽地介绍了他们的理论。

（3）本书把话语分析理论、Halliday 与 Hasan 等人的语言衔接理论和语言变体理论纳入到语用学的范畴，以便帮助读者更好地学习、掌握和运用语言；学会运用定量分析方法科学地分析和评价人们的语言交际。

（4）本书力求深入浅出，以大量具体生动的实例展开各专题的教学内容，把系统性、规范性、学术性和实用性相结合，让各专业方向的学生和读者都不感到语用学深奥难懂，枯燥无味，充分认识到本课程的理论价值和实用价值，并以极大的兴趣，积极主动地学习。通过本教程的学习，学生既可以提高语用学的理论水平，加深对语言的认识，又可以提高语言交际能力，使口头语言和书面语言的交流更加完美有效。

本课程共分三部分，由九个章节组成。

第一部分：讨论语用学与语境。分两章，首先介绍语言研究如何发展出语用学，语用学的研究对象，然后讨论语境研究的重要性。

第二部分：语言的实际运用。分四章，分别介绍言语行为理论、会话合作原则、礼貌原则和礼貌策略理论。

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第三部分：语言实际运用分析，分三章介绍语言变体理论、语言衔接理论和话语分析理论。

各章节附有复习题、笔头作业、参考书目和参考答案。本教程既可作为英语专业高年级学生和研究生用书，又可作为同等学历人员的自学参考。

本书在编写过程中，得到语言学博士黄豪的支持和帮助，他对一稿和二稿提出了宝贵的建议，在此深表谢意。

由于编者水平有限，书中不足之处，恳请读者不吝赐教。

杨潮光
对外经济贸易大学
2008 年 3 月

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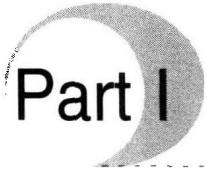

Introduction

You have already learned about the meaning system, wording system and sounding system of human language. And you are also aware of the close relationship between language, thought and reality, between language, culture, society and individuals, and of the importance of language in all walks of life.

To understand how language is put to use in real life, why we make particular choice of expression and what we mean by what we say, there is still more ground that needs to be covered for our effective and successful communication.

This course aims to provide such knowledge and competence under the name of pragmatics. The course will be divided in three parts. Here we will begin with the first part, the concepts of pragmatics and context.

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Introduction

Chapter 1

What Is Pragmatics?

In this chapter we will first briefly review the development in the study of language. Now we will introduce the concept of pragmatics, followed by a discussion of the differences between semantics and pragmatics.

1.1 Development in the Study of Language

The development of Modern Linguistics has gone through the following four stages:

a. Morphological
↓
Focusing on the formative rules of words in language, started by F. de Saussure (1857 – 1913), later including the study of phonology by American structuralists like L. Bloomfield (1887 – 1949), etc.

b. Syntactic
↓
Focusing on syntactic structure of language, as those done by N. Chomsky in the middle of 1950s.

c. Semantic

Gradual attention was given to the study of meaning by functionalists in the 60's of last century.

d. Pragmatic

The study of meaning quickly led to the study of contextual factors in verbal communication in the second-half of last century, forming a new discipline in the study of language which covers the study of form, meaning and context of language use. The British anthropologist Malinowski, when faced with problems of translation, concentrated on what people were doing when using the language. He found that when people speak, they not only use their knowledge of language, but also their knowledge of the situation. The situation here refers to the context of situation. So according to him, "Language is always contextualized."

The term 'Pragmatics' was first introduced by English philosophers C. W. Morris and R. Carnap in the 20th century in their study of 'Semiotics' when they tried to reveal the relationship between signs and their interpreters. Later the term came to be used in the sense of 'the study of language in use', that is, 'how language is used to communicate among people.'

Pragmatics, therefore, is a much wider discipline in the study of language, developed and expanded from semantics, by covering the study of form, meaning and use of language.

1.2 Concept of Pragmatics

'Pragma-' is a Latin free morpheme, meaning 'to act' or 'to do'.

Pragmatics, therefore, is the study of language use from a functional and dynamic perspective, and is concerned with the principles accounting for how meaning is communicated by the speaker and interpreted by the hearer in an act of speech in a given context. For instance, the sentence "Could you pass me the salt, Please." is actually not a question but a request. And by the same token, the sentence "Please be more careful next time." should not be taken as a request but a criticism or even a warning issued by the teacher to a student. So pragmatics deals with those principles governing the appropriate use of language in context.

According to Levinson (1983),

a. Pragmatics is the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding.
b. Pragmatics is the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate.
c. Pragmatics is the study of all those aspects of meaning not captured in a semantic theory. That is,
   the study of meaning = semantics + pragmatics.

Some other definitions are as follows:

a. Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning. It is the study of contextual meaning. (George Yule, 2000)
b. Pragmatics is a theory which seeks to characterize how speakers use the sentences of a language to effect successful communication. (Kempson, 1975)
c. Pragmatics is the study of language use and linguistic communication. (Akmajian, 1979)
d. Pragmatics is the study of how context affects meaning. (Fromkin, 1998)

In a word, pragmatics is a discipline, focusing on the study of the use and comprehension of language.

1.3 Differences Between Semantics and Pragmatics

What is the difference between semantics and pragmatics, which are both the study of meaning of language? Now let us look into the question.

What does it mean by the word 'dog' in the sentence "There is a big dog at the gate"? And the meaning of the sentences "It's cold outside" and "Will you keep quiet"?

To semanticists, the word 'dog' here refers to a mammal, belonging to a class of 'the hound.' And "It's cold outside." is a statement concerning the weather, expressed in a declarative sentence. "Will you keep quiet?" asked in the interrogative mood is a question whether you can remain quiet.

That is to say, semantics studies the internal, fixed, static and literal meanings of language. It mainly concerns the linguistic form and the truth value of the semantic proposition of a linguistic unit in

terms of sense and reference, which are not affected by external factors. It is the study of literal meaning that comes from linguistic knowledge alone. Therefore, semantics studies context-free meanings. It is also known as 'formal semantics' or 'logical semantics.'

However, the word 'dog' used in a sentence "He is a dog." may carry different meanings in different cultural contexts. In China, it may mean "He is a dirty or a greedy person, to be looked down on." Declarative sentences may also carry an affective meaning like warning or threat to the hearer, such as, "There is a big dog at the gate." which can mean, "Be careful." Or "Come and have a look!" And "It's cold outside." can mean, "Don't go out.", or "Better put on more clothes." "Will you keep quiet?" can mean "Shut up, otherwise I will drive you out." Semantics does not concern about this kind of meaning.

So, to really understand the meaning of these utterances, the accompanied extra-linguistic factors, such as the language users' intention and the situation, etc., should be taken into account.

Pragmatics relates the literal meaning of language to its users, trying to understand 'who' and 'to what context' the word or the sentence is applied. So it concerns the communicative value of a linguistic unit, and it takes the concrete and dynamic meaning of the language used in a particular context into account. That is, pragmatics is the study of context-based meanings.

For example:

"*It is cold outside.*"

Semantically, it just means, "The temperature is rather low in

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