英语语用学导论

INTRODUCING ENGLISH PRAGMATICS

徐伟儒　编著

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徐伟儒 编著

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序

汪榕培

自语用学的第一本教科书、列文森（S.C. Levinson）的《语用学》（Pragmatics）于 1983 年问世，主要内容包括会话含意、言语行为、指示语、前提、话语结构等。在经过短短的十几年时间以后，语用学已经悄然成为语言学的一个热门学科，研究范围也已经大大地扩展开来，不仅跟社会各阶层的语言使用结合起来，而且跟外语教学和跨文化交际结合起来。

我国的语用学研究经历了引进、消化和发展几个阶段，现在也已经成为语言学的一个热门学科。据我所知，我国仅语用学的专著就已经出版了何自然的《语用学概论》（湖南人民出版社，1988）和《语用学与英语学习》（上海外语教育出版社，1997）、何兆熊的《语用学概要》（上海外语教育出版社，1989）和《新编语用学概要》（上海外语教育出版社，1999）、王建华的《语用学在语文教学中的运用》（杭州大学出版社，1993）、徐盛恒的《语用问题研究》（河南大学出版社，1996）、陈宗明的《中国语用学思想》（浙江教育出版社，1997）、陆钦红的《语用学新论》（西南师范大学出版社，1998》、王西城的《语用学教程》（汕头大学出版社，1999）、熊学亮的《认知语用学概论》（上海外语教育出版社，1999）、陈忠的《信息语用学》（山东教育出版社，1999）等十余部，为在中国传播语用学知识、拓展语用学的研究范围、以汉语为对象进行语用学研究起了积极的作用。

我非常高兴地又看到了徐伟儒教授用英语编著的洋洋大作《英语语用学导论》，粗略阅读以后，我发现了该书有以下两个独到之处：

第一，全书对“本学科的范围”、“基本概念”、“信息结构”、“奥斯丁、舍尔及言语行为”、“言语行为与会话”、“言语行为与它的通常运用”、“交际中的人类文化学”、“交际中的礼貌”、“小说中的会话”、“语用学与思维”、“意向性与可接受性”、“语言的功能”、“言语互动的效应”、“语用学与话语分析”、“语义学与语用学”、“跨文化交际”等 15 个专题进行了详细的论述，涉及领域广泛，足以成为一部超级的“导论”。

第二，《英语语用学导论》的标题说是“导论”，篇幅却有 16 开本近 400 页，冠已经出版的语用学著作之首。这本书不仅篇幅大、范围广，而且为适应教学的需要而使用英语论述，为切合我国读者实际而深入浅 出，是我国第一部用英语编著的语用学教材，对英语专业高年级学生、研究生、英语教师和翻译工作者都有用处。

综上所述，《英语语用学导论》是新世纪来临之际的又一朵报春花，预示着我国语用学研究将会逐渐摆脱亦步亦趋地步西方学者后尘的局面，把语用学理论跟英语和汉语的实践结合起来，最终开创具有中国特色的语用学学派。

徐伟儒教授是我的老朋友，可以称得上是一位“德艺双馨”的学者。我为他多年来笔耕不已、硕果累累而倍感欣慰，衷心祝愿他在耳顺之年继续耕耘、收获金秋的果实。是为序。

大连外国语学院院长　教授

2000 年 9 月 28 日深夜于大连

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前　言

《英语语用学导论》（Introducing English Pragmatics）是根据我国改革开放、不断创新的精神，为迎接21世纪的到来，科教兴国，教育先行，于1997年开始编写的，是在沈阳师范学院外语学院关怀和鼓舞下完成的。

本书遵循温故知新、后次复习前次的规律，对英语语用学中的基本概念、基本理论、基本原则及准则予以较详论述；力求例句、例段丰富有趣、实践性强、时代性鲜明；同时本书也是运用这些基本道理进行语言研究的具体体现。本书还论述语用学同语法、语义及话语分析三者之间密切而又各自独立的关系，专门谈到礼貌和面子问题，以及跨文化交际、人类文化学等。全书意在既博采众家之精华，又适合我国之实情。本书可供英语专业高年级学生、尤其是硕士生使用，也是英语教师和翻译工作者的实用参考书。读者一方面可以加深了解英语语言，开阔视野，提高实践能力，另一方面还能够对汉语语用方面的研究有所联想，有所探讨，有所推动。

语用学是语言学中较新的一个重要学科，它的突出特征是对语言进行动态描写、动态分析、动态研究。可以说，语用学离不开时空背景和交际的双方，也离不开情景中的语境。

历年来，西方哲学家及语言学家先后为语用学所确立的定义，经历了由非常概括到相当具体这样一个过程。Charles Morris（1938）认为，语用学的宗旨是研究符号同理解者之间的关系；Abercrombie（1948）说，语用学研究语言之所为；1954年前后，又有人称语用学像个方便垃圾袋，凡不能用已有的理论加以解释的那些令人烦恼的语言现实，都可被归入语用学这个方便袋之中；Searle（1962，主要是Austin）认为，语用学研究言语行为、语言施为性及如何恰当施为；Grice（1975）则提出，语用学是研究语言交际中交谈双方共同遵守的合作原则；Leech（1983）又说，语用学是研究话语如何在情景中具有意义，不仅同合作原则相关，更与礼貌原则密不可分，同年Levinson说，纯语用学是研究信念、话语及意图等概念，研究这些概念之间内在的逻辑关系；到20世纪90年代初，又有人（如Mey，1993）以警告的口气说，要给语用学确切地下定义，那就像彻底弄清如何参加一项新的体育竞赛一样——“除非亲临场地仔细观察人们的比赛过程，否则，让你无从解释，无法掌握。”Parker与Riley（1994）两人认为，语用学研究语言是怎样在有情景的语境中用来交际的，而同年Finegan提出，语用学是研究信息结构的；George Yule（1996）

则相当具体地提出，语用学研究说话者说话的意图、语境的意义、交谈中的言外之意、人们之间社会距离程度不同的表达方式等。此外，我国的何自然教授（1997）认为，语用学研究在特定情景中的特定话语，研究如何通过语境来理解和使用语言。不同时期出现这些语用学的不同表述的定义充分表明，语用学经历了发展、充实、交流、完善的过程，同时还有力地、客观地说明语用学对语言的研究是动态的，这同对语言进行静态研究（如语法、语义、语音等）形成了鲜明对照。

本书共15章，每章末尾提供研讨性的问题。正文之后列出以每章为单元的英汉术语索引，便于读者查阅、对照。说到索引，是我的三位硕士研究生李远、张有军、张蓉应我之约请，按英文字母顺序，将我先行选定的英汉对照术语编排成序的。

本书原是我近几年的讲义稿，经过去粗取精、多次修改、认真整理编写而成。书中一定有失误或疏漏之处，衷心希望语言学界的同行邻里、广大读者及各位专家批评指正。

徐伟儒

2000年7月于沈阳

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Chapter 1

The Scope of the Subject

（本学科的范围）

Pragmatics, originating in a broader investigation of meaning of language and in a deeper study of semantics, is a new branch of linguistics and a study of the specific utterances in the specific situation, the study of how to understand and to use language through contexts. Pragmatics is also relevant to the science of signs or semiotics which finds its expression in psychological phenomena, physiological phenomena and social behaviour.

In communication, it is natural to understand the literary meaning of the utterances, on the one hand, that is, the meaning of natural language itself, including phonology, vocabulary and syntactic structure, but that is not enough, the participants in communication have, on the other hand, to understand the context, the presuppositions of all utterances, the speaker's intention or meaning, and the hearer's inferences. Take the following sentences for example:

(1) A: You are a fool.

B: What does a fool mean?

C: What do you mean by saying a fool?

It is obvious that B in (1) is asking for the literary meaning of the "fool", that is, the meaning of language proper. Whereas C wants to know the speaker's intention by saying so.

(2) say CHEESE! [tʃi:z]

The speaker in (2) wants everyone to twist their mouths so that they can put on a smiling face at the time when the camera works.

(3) Lights, please!

When the lecturer often uses movies or slides to be helper in his lecture, and thus says the above sentence (imperative) (3), the worker in charge of the lights would act correctly and accurately each time by turning on or turning off the lights, because the worker knows very

well the intention of the speaker in the light of the context in which the sentence is produced. Also consider this utterance:

(4) I now pronounce you husband and wife.

The sentence (4) may be uttered in at least two different sets of circumstances: 1) by a pastor presiding at a ceremony to a young couple getting married in the presence of their assembled families; or 2) by an actor dressed as a pastor addressing to two actors before a congregation of Hollywood extras assembled in the same church by a director giving instructions for the filming of a soap opera. In the first instance, *I now pronounce you husband and wife* will effect a marriage between the couple intending to get married. But that same utterance will have no effect on the marital status of any party on the movie location. Thus the circumstances of utterance create different meanings, although the referential meaning of the sentence remains unchanged. It is therefore necessary to know the circumstances of utterance in order to understand the effect or force of the utterance. We say that the sentence uttered in the wedding context and the sentence uttered in the film context have the same referential meaning but are different utterances, each with its own utterance meaning.

The difference between sentence meaning and utterance meaning can be further illustrated by the question *Can you shut the window?* There are at least two ways in which the addressee might react to this question. One possible response would be to say Yes (meaning "Yes, I am physically capable of shutting the window.") and to do nothing about it. This is the "smart-aleck" interpretation; it is of course not the way such a question is intended in most cases. Another way in which the addressee might react would be to get up and shut the window. Obviously, these interpretations of the same question are different: The smart-aleck interpretation treats the question as a request for information; the second interpretation treats it as a request for action. To describe the difference between these interpretations, we say that they are distinct utterances.

Sentence semantics is not concerned with utterance meaning. Utterance meaning is the subject of investigation of another branch of linguistics called pragmatics. One of the premises of sentence semantics is that sentences must be divorced from the context in which they are uttered. In other words, sentences and utterances must be distinguished. To experienced language users, this stance may appear strange and counterintuitive, since so much meaning depends on context. The point is not to discard context as unimportant. Rather, it is to recognize that, in a fundamental sense, sentence meaning is independent of context, while utterance meaning depends crucially on the circumstances of the utterance. Semantics is the branch of linguistics that examines word meaning and sentence meaning while generally ignoring context; pragmatics, in contrast, pays less attention to the relationship of word meaning to sentence meaning and more attention to the relationship of an utterance to its context.

Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader). It has, consequently, more to do with the

analysis of what people mean by their utterances than what the words or phrases in those utterances might mean by themselves. Pragmatics is the study of speaker's meaning.

This type of study necessarily involves the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is said. It requires a consideration of how speakers organize what they want to say in accordance with who they're talking to, where, when, and under what circumstances. Pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning.

This approach also necessarily explores how listeners can make inferences about what is said in order to arrive at an interpretation of the speaker's intended meaning. This type of study explores how a great deal of what is unsaid is recognized as part or what is communicated. We might say that it is the investigation of invisible meaning. Pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than is said.

This perspective then raises the question of what determines the choice between the said and the unsaid. The basic answer is tied to the notion of distance. Closeness, whether it is physical, social, or conceptual, implies shared experience. On the assumption of how close or distant the listener is, speakers determine how much needs to be said; Pragmatics is the study of the expression of relative distance.

These are the principal areas that pragmatics is concerned with. To understand how it got to be that way, we have to briefly review its relationship with other areas of linguistic analysis.

One traditional distinction in language analysis contrasts pragmatics with syntax and semantics. Syntax is the study of the relationships between linguistic forms, how they are arranged in sequence, and which sequences are well-formed. This type of study generally takes place without considering any world of reference or any user of the forms. Semantics is the study of the relationships between linguistic forms and entities in the world; that is, how words literally connect to things. Semantic analysis also attempts to establish the relationships between verbal descriptions and states of affairs in the world as accurate (true) or not, regardless of who produces that description.

Pragmatics is the study of the relationships between linguistic forms and the users of those forms. In this three-part distinction, only pragmatics allows humans into the analysis. The advantage of studying language via pragmatics is that one can talk about people's intended meanings, their assumptions, their purposes or goals, and the kinds of actions (for example, requests) that they are performing when they speak. The big disadvantage is that all these very human concepts are extremely difficult to analyze in a consistent and objective way. Two friends (A and B) having a conversation may imply some things and infer some others without providing any clear linguistics evidence that we can point to as the explicit source of "the meaning" of what was communicated. Example is just such a problematic case:

(5) A: So — did you?

B: Hey — who wouldn't?

Thus, pragmatics is appealing because it's about how people make sense of each other linguistically, but it can be a frustrating area of study because it requires us to make sense of people and what they have in mind. Luckily, people tend to behave in fairly regular ways when it comes to using language. Some of that regularity derives from the fact that people are members of social groups and follow general patterns of behavior expected within the group. Within a familiar social group, we normally find it easy to be polite and say appropriate things. In a new, unfamiliar social setting, we are often unsure about what to say and worry that we might say the wrong thing.

Another source of regularity in language use derives from the fact that most people within a linguistic community have similar basic experiences of the world and share a lot of non-linguistic knowledge. Let's say that, in the middle of a conversation, one mentions the information in (6):

(6) I found an old bicycle lying on the ground. The chain was rusted and the tires were flat.

You are unlikely to ask why a chain and some tires were suddenly being mentioned. I can normally assume that you will make the inference that if X is a bicycle, then X has a chain and tires (and many others regular parts). Because of this type of assumption, it would be pragmatically odd for me to have expressed (6) as (7).

(7) I found an old bicycle. A bicycle has a chain. The chain was rusted.

A bicycle also has tires. The tires were flat.

You would perhaps think that more was being communicated than was being said and that you were being treated as someone with no basic knowledge (i.e. as stupid). Once again, nothing in the use of linguistic forms is inaccurate, but getting the pragmatics wrong might be offensive.

The types of regularities just described are extremely simple examples of language in use which are largely ignored by most linguistic analyses. To understand why it has become the province of pragmatics to investigate these, and many other, aspects of ordinary language in use, we need to take a brief historical look at how things got to be the way they are.

Pragmatics is also concerned about the teaching and learning of foreign languages. So the cross-cultural phenomena sometimes also influence a lot the understanding of utterances in communication.

A nation's culture means all the conventional features of the social environment, including 4Ms: memories, metaphors, maxims and myths.

Suppose we have two groups of dialogue:

(8) A: Do you like rugby?

B: I am a New Zealander.

It is well-known that almost all the people in New Zealand like rugby, so B's answer in (8) implies "yes".

(9) A: Do you like rice?

B: I am a Cantonese, you know.

The same is true of B's answer in (9).

(10) A: What's on television?

B: (consulting the newspaper) Nothing!

By saying *nothing* in (10), B may mean:

1) Nothing worth watching.

2) Nothing. All the TV stations are on strike.

(11) John: Are you going to the seminar?

Mary: It's on pragmatics.

Mary's answer in (11) may mean:

1) Yes, I go to anything that is on pragmatics.

2) No, I am not going to the seminar.

By saying No, Mary may mean:

△ She is not interested in pragmatics.

△ She knows very well that nearly no one likes pragmatics.

△ or She means many other suppositions based on "It's on pragmatics."

Pragmatics is also a science of study of linguistic appropriateness and linguistic tact in communications. That is, pragmatics prefers linguistic appropriateness and tact rather than grammatical and semantic logic. Look at and think about the examples below:

(12) a. Will we get an answer soon?

b. Who did you talk to?

c. Everybody enjoyed the play, didn't they?

d. None of them were able to come;

e. Switzerland is between France, Germany, Austria and Italy.

f. Would you mind me sitting here?

g. The two boys looked at one another suspiciously.

h. Can I use your telephone?

i. Don't worry, it's me here.

Even the following sentences (13) and (14) are appropriate in the specific context though they are not proper in logical or semantic sense:

(13) Golf plays John.

In appearance the sentence (13) goes against the selectional restrictions, but if we know the presupposition of the sentence that if John failed time and again in the Golf match, the speaker, who has much sympathy for John, could say so and it sounds very tactful. In general, we have to pay attention to a nation's culture. In order to make utterance appropriate and tactful, our saying or speaking must be moderate, we should just say whatever is needed, no more, no less. For example:

(14) I am sorry to hear about your grandma.

When you said (14), you wanted to show your sympathy and express your sorrow for your friend whose grandmother passed away, but you should not say:

(14') I was sorry to hear that your grandma killed herself.

(14") I was very sorry to hear your grandma tripped over the cat, cartwheeled down the stairs and brained on the electricity meter.

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