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前　言

从二十世纪七八十年代至今，语用学经历了形成、发展及实践探讨的过程，也陆续成为许多高校英语专业的语言学课程之一。《英语语用学》梳理、介绍语用学的沿革、理论、方法及研究前沿，既可以用作语用学专题研究的参考书，也可以用作高校英语专业本科高年级学生、语言学专业研究生和英语爱好者系统学习、了解语用学理论与实践的教材。

全书共七章，内容涉及学科缘起、语用意义、指示、含意、合作原则、关联理论、预设、言语行为理论及会话分析。此外，每章附有练习、思考问题和阅读书目。

本书注重学术规范性与第一手文献的使用，力求对理论进行深入浅出的讲解、分析，并合理利用脚注对相关内容予以必要的补充说明，这样既避免冲淡主题，又为读者查阅所需材料提供便利。每章对重要内容进行了言简意赅的总结，读者可借助这些归纳对相关要点进行复习与回顾。各章练习设计尽量采用真实语料，其间穿插富有启发性的思考问题，以使读者运用所学知识分析语言应用实践，进而将知识学习与科研探索相结合。鉴于目前语用学较为丰富的文献资料，本书在每章的结束处提供了阅读书目，读者可以根据个人的兴趣和条件，利用这些书目进行扩展阅读，以拓宽学术视野。

参与《英语语用学》编写的作者均在高校从事语用学及语言学其他学科的教学与研究，积累了较为丰富的教学经验与研究体会。书中部分内容已在华中师范大学英语专业本科生及研究生中使用多年，在教学相长的过程中得到了不断的修改与完善。

本书的具体分工是：高晓芳（华中师范大学外国语学院）：第一 、二、三、四、五章以及全书的定稿；周统权（华中师范大学外国语学院）：第六章；张萍（中南财经政法大学外国语学院）：第七章。

写书是一件艰苦且遗憾的事情。尽管我们付出了努力，但是交付定稿之后还是发现本书存在这样或那样的问题。我们真切希望得到同行的指教与批评，也真诚希望读者提出意见与建议。

本书的写作与出版得到了华中师范大学外国语学院师生的关心与华中师范大学出版社的支持，责编廖国春尤其倾注了大量的时间与精力，对书中内容与文字进行了严格把关，使之避免了不少的疏漏。编者在此向他们表示衷心的感谢！

编者

2007 年 12 月

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Chapter Ⅰ Pragmatics and pragmatic aspects of language use

1.1 A historical overview of the term "pragmatics"

The English term "**pragmatics**" was first introduced by Charles W. Morris (1938[①]), an American philosopher, who developed his own stance on behaviourist **semiotic** or **semiotics**[②]. By then, Morris was concerned with semiosis, that is, the process in which something functions as a sign. According to him, semiosis involves three dimensions or levels: **semantics**, **pragmatics**, and **syntactics** (syntax).

The three dimensions or levels were defined, respectively, as: **semantics** (or semantical dimension of semiosis) studies "the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable"; **pragmatics** (or pragmatical dimension of semiosis) studies "the relation of signs to interpreters"; **syntactics** (or the syntactical dimension of semiosis) studies "the formal relation of signs to one another" (Morris, 1938: 6-7).

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① According to one reference, Morris used the term "pragmatics" as early as in 1937 when he published *Logical Positivism, Pragmatism and Scientific Empiricism*(姜望琪,2000: 3-4).

② Semiotics and semiotic are technical terms for "the study of signs". Semiotic is the term used by Morris (1938: 2) for "a science... studying things or the properties of things in their function of serving as signs".

Here Morris' use of "sign" is pretty misleading since syntactics or syntax also studies morphemes (for example, the past tense marker "-ed" in English), which are not signs according to the theory of Semiotic Triangle(伍谦光,1988:75-81) for having no real object in reality. In this sense, Steven Davis suggests that it is better to replace "sign" with "linguistic unit" because the latter applies to morphemes, phrases, sentences, etc. He holds that:

> With this change we can take Morris to claim that syntax is the study of the grammatical relations of linguistic units to one another, and the grammatical structures of phrases and sentences that result from these grammatical relations; that semantics is the study of the relation of linguistic units to the world; and that pragmatics is the study of the relation of linguistic units to their users. (Davis, 1991:3)

In the second half of his writing, Morris expanded the term "pragmatics" and explained:

> Since most, if not all, signs have as their interpreters living organisms, it is a sufficiently accurate characterization of pragmatics to say that it deals with the biotic aspects of semiosis, that is, with all the psychological, biological, and sociological phenomena which occur in the functioning of signs. (Morris, 1938:30)

The problem with Morris' expansion of the term "pragmatics" with respect to its scope is that it is too broad to be of much use. According to his view, the scope of pragmatics includes almost all human activities, and shall cover such studies as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, neurolinguistics, etc. If so, how can pragmatics have its own research

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domain and thus gain its academic identity?

Generally speaking, the term "pragmatics" has been used in two different ways since Morris made the above expansion. On the one hand, the broad usage held by Morris has been retained and has been most popular on the Continent (e. g. Mey, 1993, 2001; Verschueren, 2000; issues of the *Journal of Pragmatics* since 1977, and *Pragmatics* since 1991). This accounts for the reasons why pragmatics has come to overlap with many other areas of linguistic inquiry. Below are several fields of linguistic study that overlap with pragmatics:

Semantics: Pragmatics and semantics both take into account such notions as the intentions of the speaker, the effects of an utterance on listeners, the implications that follow from expressing something in a certain way, and the knowledge, beliefs, and presuppositions about the world upon which speakers and listeners rely when they interact.

Stylistics and Sociolinguistics: These fields overlap with pragmatics in their study of the social relations which exist between participants, and of the way extralinguistic setting, activity, and subject-matter can constrain the choice of linguistic features and varieties.

Psycholinguistics: Pragmatics and psycholinguistics both investigate the psychological states and abilities of the participants that will have a major effect upon their performance — such factors as attention, memory, and personality.

Discourse Analysis: Both discourse analysis and pragmatics are centrally concerned with the analysis of conversation, and share several of the philosophical and linguistic notions that have been developed to handle this topic (such as the way information is distributed within a sentence, deictic forms, or the notion of conversational 'maxims'). (Crystal, 1987:120-121)

On the other hand, however, the scope of the term "pragmatics" has been continuously narrowed down. Several philosophers and logicians were influential in this aspect. One of the chief representatives was Rudolf Carnap, a German philosopher. Basically, Carnap agrees to Morrisian usage and formulates the following three-way distinction:

> If we are analysing a language, then we are concerned, of course, with expressions. But we need not necessarily also deal with speakers and designata①. Although these factors are present whenever language is used, we may abstract from one or both of them in what we intend to say about the language in question. Accordingly, we distinguish three fields of investigation of languages. If in an investigation explicit reference is made to the speaker, or, to put it in more general terms, to the user of a language, then we assign it to the field of pragmatics. (Whether in this case reference to designata is made or not makes no difference for this classification.) If we abstract from the user of the language and analyse only the expressions and their designata, we are in the field of semantics. And if, finally, we abstract from the designata also and analyse only the relations between the expressions, we are in (logical) syntax. The whole science of language, consisting of the three parts mentioned, is called semiotic. (Carnap, 1942: 9)

From the perspective of analytical philosophy, Carnap's idea that pragmatics was an investigation making "explicit reference... to the user of a language" may naturally lead to a further restriction. Such explicit reference to the language user will inevitably lead to the study of **deictic** or **indexical** words like the personal pronouns "I" and "you" because the

① "Designata" is the plural form of "designatum", to which the sign refers.

use of these words can help us determine whether some general schemes of logical reasoning are correct or not. For example:

1) *I am Mary, Mary is a woman, and therefore I am a woman.*

The conclusion *and therefore, I am a woman* is true only if the first two premises are true and the two "I"s apply to the same speaker.

Under the influence of Carnap's work, Yehoshua Bar-Hillel (1954) proposed that pragmatics was the study of languages that contain deictic or indexical expressions since reference to these words relied on the identification of participants, time, and place in interaction. Donald Kalish (1967) and, especially, Richard Montague (1968) followed this usage to think that pragmatics was the study of deictic or indexical items. For a time, the scope of pragmatics was implicitly restricted to the study of deixis or deictic words in natural language.

If we consider carefully Kalish and Montague's view of taking pragmatics as the study of deictic words, we can find that it is too narrow because utterances that do not contain any deictic items may not be clear in meaning at all. For example:

2) *Butter, please!*

This utterance may mean "I'd like to buy some butter" for a customer in a supermarket; "I want to order some butter" for someone who is dining in a restaurant; "Pass me some butter" as a request among family members at table, etc. In a dramatic situation, if "Butter" happens to be the name of a guy, then the utterance is made to draw someone's attention.

Therefore, Carnap's usage can be modified into something like this: pragmatics was the linguistic investigations "making explicit reference to aspects of context".

In this section, up to now, we have looked at a set of interpretations

of the term "pragmatics"①: by Morris first as the study of the relation of signs to interpreters and later as the study of the huge range of psychological and sociological phenomena involved in sign system in general or in language in particular, overlapping with several fields of linguistic study; by Carnap as an investigation making explicit reference to the user of a language; by Bar-Hillel, Kalish and Montague as the study of indexical or deictic words; by the modern usage as the linguistic investigations making explicit reference to aspects of context.

1.2 Pragmatics as a branch of linguistics

Morris' introduction of pragmatics didn't draw much attention from the linguistic world before the 1970s, the period dominated by Chomsky's transformational-generative grammar. For this, Geoffrey N. Leech (1983: 1) made a vivid description of the situation, saying that "the subject of 'pragmatics' is very familiar in linguistics today. Fifteen years ago it was mentioned by linguists rarely, if at all".

It was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that pragmatics started to gain academic acceptance. Three factors have contributed to the establishment of pragmatics as an independent branch of linguistics. Firstly, Jacob L. Mey and Hartmut Haberland started the publication of

① Historical surveys of some parts of pragmatics during early periods have already started appearing in *Roots of Pragmatics, England: 1500-1700* by Anat Biletzhi (1987, PhD thesis, Tel-Aviv University, supervisors: Asa Kasher and Amos Funkenstein) who examines pragmatics in England from 1500 to 1700, and *Language, Action and Context: A History of Pragmatics in Europe and America, 1780-1930* by Brigitte Nerlich and David D. Clarke (1996, Amsterdam: John Benjamins). Major theoretical frameworks of pragmatics are still to be traced to the writings of Morris, Carnap, Bar-Hillel, and Martin (Kasher, 1998, Vol. I: 3-5).

the *Journal of Pragmatics* in Holland in 1977; secondly, *Pragmatics* by Stephen C. Levinson and *Principles of Pragmatics* by Leech were published in 1983; thirdly, the International Pragmatics Association (IPrA) was set up in Belgium in 1986.

In section 1. 1, a historical overview concerning the origin and development of the term "pragmatics" was made. Obviously, as a result of the overlapping areas of interest, several conflicting definitions have arisen. This book will not attempt an account of the existing definitions. Instead, it will follow the one offered by David Crystal (1987: 120), namely, "pragmatics studies the factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effects of our choice on others". The recommendation of this definition is due to its concerns with both language speakers (or writers) and listeners (or readers), and with the contextual elements (e. g. "factors" linking to contextual constituents) that may constrain people's use of language.

There are many factors influencing the use of language in social interaction. Such factors include social rules or customs, norms of formality, politeness, intimacy, etc. For example, in theory, people can say anything they like. In practice, however, they follow (unconsciously, in most cases) a large number of social rules, especially when they are talking to those who are older, of the opposite sex, and so on. Writing and signing behaviours are governed in similar ways.

The influence of pragmatic factors on language use can be found in the selection of sounds, grammatical structures, and vocabulary. Take English intonation. A reply made with low fall often sounds cold and detached while the same reply made with high fall may sound pleasant

and happy. In many languages, pragmatic distinctions of formality, politeness, intimacy, etc. are spread throughout the phonological, lexical, and grammatical systems, ultimately reflecting matters of social class, status, and role.

Grammar is rule-governed. It is, therefore, easy for us to spot errors that do not obey grammatical rules. For example:

3) *A man rides a horse* [haus]. (a phonological error)

A horse rides a man. (a semantic error)

A man ride a horse. (a syntactic error)

Pragmatic errors, however, may break no rules of phonology, semantics, or syntax. Take the following two conversations:

4) (The conversation is held between two friends, Jim and Jack.)

Jim: *Will you come to my birthday party tonight ?*

Jack: *Of course.* (with high fall intonation)

5) (The conversation is between Henry, a visitor, and John, a company assistant. John meets Henry at an airport and takes him to a hotel, at the entrance of which they have the following conversation. This is their first meeting.)

Henry: *Is it a good hotel ?*

John: *Of course.* (with low fall intonation)

The above two answers seem to be the same, but the effects on the addressees① are different. In 4), Jack's answer shows eagerness and willingness to go to Jim's birthday party. It sounds pleasant and makes the addressee (Jim) happy. In 5), John's answer (although it is the same

① The term "addressee" refers to the person a speaker addresses in talk.

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