语用学研究

Studies in Pragmatics

第五辑
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《语用学研究》编委会

序　言

　　作为语言学的一门新兴学科，语用学之所以能够在20世纪70年代被确认成为一门独立的学科，是因为发生了一个标志性事件：1977年，《语用学学刊》(*Journal of Pragmatics*)在荷兰正式出版、发行。该刊对推动语用学在全世界的发展起了巨大的作用。

　　在过去的二十余年里，中国语用学研究的迅猛发展进程中有许多令人瞩目的里程碑：

　　1980年，胡壮麟先生发表《语用学》一文，第一次把语用学作为一门学科较系统地介绍给中国学人；

　　1988年，何自然先生编著的中国第一本语用学教材《语用学概论》出版问世，极大地推动了语用学研究在中国的开展、普及和发展；

　　1989年，首届全国语用学研讨会在广东外语外贸大学的前身——广州外国语学院隆重召开；

　　2004年，在中国修辞学会的支持下，中国语用学研究会正式成立，研究会的工作网站也随即开启。

　　在当今中国语言学研究领域，语用学占据重要的地位。语用学研究成果广泛发表于各类语言学刊物以及综合性学报。我们认为，为了给增量迅猛的语用学研究成果提供更多的平台，提升中国语用学研究成果的交流效果，中国语用学迫切需要一个属于自己的专业平台。《语用学研究》便是为了适应这一需要而诞生的。

　　《语用学研究》有着庞大的作者群。据不完全统计，迄今为止，国内拥有语用学研究方向的博士点逾十个，拥有语用学研究方向的硕士点数十个，全国范围内从事语用学研究的专家、学者、博士、硕士数以千计，且在不断增长，他们将会把《语用学研究》当作自己与同行切磋语用研究心得的平台。当然，国外语用学专家以及国内其他相邻学科的专家也将成为《语用学研究》的潜在撰稿人。

　　《语用学研究》有着广阔的读者群。语用学是一个带有跨学科性质的研究领域，其研究成果具有广阔的应用空间。语用学又是关注语言生活的学科，对各类语言实践具有直接的指导意义。可以相信，凡是对语言哲学、语言逻辑、认知科学、人工智能与信息处理、社会心理、人际交往、语言教育、语言应用、儿童发展、跨文化交际等感兴趣的读者都可以从《语用学研究》中读到自己关心的研究成果。

　　《语用学研究（第五辑）》登载的是2011年在山西大学召开的第十二届全国语用学研讨会上发布的优秀论文。

　　作为中国语用学研究会主编、高等教育出版社出版发行的专业文集，《语用学

研究》的目标是高远而明确的，那就是前沿性、专业性、学术性和本土性。我们特别欢迎本国学者在本土语料上做出的具有中国特色的学术成果。

《语用学研究》的起航代表了一个新时期的到来，让我们齐头并进，为她的平安远航而共同努力吧！

何自然　陈新仁
2012年8月20日

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Understanding Interlanguage Pragmatics: Towards a Critical Review

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Abstract: This article reviews, in a critical way, interlanguage pragmatics as a newly developed discipline in pragmatics. Interlanguage pragmatics has been defined as a study of the L2 or FL pragmatic knowledge in terms of its use and acquisition/development intended by non-native speakers in instructed or non-instructed settings. Although it has much to do with SLA, interlanguage pragmatics is generally regarded as a part of pragmatics. Three main topics are covered, dealing with interlanguage pragmatics respectively from the characterizational, theoretical and empirical perspectives. It is concluded that much is called for in order for interlanguage pragmatics to be functional in guiding the L2/FL learners both in the theoretical and practical sense.

Key words: interlanguage pragmatics; L2/FL learners; language use and acquisition; critical review

❶ Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language in L2 or foreign language context, as is proposed by the structuralists and Chomskyan linguists, has been directed to the forms rather than the functions of language. In the Chomskyan paradigm, the goal of language learning is identified with the acquisition of underlying linguistic categories and systems, from which surface forms are derived through the application of transformational and other rules and processes of a universal type (Richards, 2001). Along this line, pedagogic principles and activities focus on syntax, aiming to develop the learners' competence in grammar. For scarce emphasis on language use in context, Chinese learners of English as a

foreign language in educational institutions of various levels fall into dilemmas of various types in cross-linguistic communications. Although many solutions have been provided for these troubles, no great gains have been made.

Pragmatics is a study of language use and comprehension. In recent years, it has been developing rapidly into a science of multidisciplinary nature, concerning itself with language functions for communicative ends from various perspectives. Interlanguage pragmatics, as a newly developed branch of pragmatics, is devoted to language use and acquisition both in the qualitative and quantitative sense, and it has been of increasing significance in L2/FL teaching and learning. This article is intended to review interlanguage pragmatics in terms of the relevant researches which have been carried out in this field.

❷ Interlanguage pragmatics research in the characterizational perspective

2.1 The concept of interlanguage

Interlanguage is a language system developed by the learner on his/her path to acquire the target language. As phrased by Ellis (1994), interlanguage refers to "the systematic knowledge of language which is independent of both the learner's L1 and L2 system he is trying to learn."

The term "interlanguage" was first introduced by Selinker in 1972. It shared similar assumptions to the alternative terms of idiosyncratic dialect by Corder (1971) and an approximative system by Newser (1971). All of the three terms are used to refer to an internally structured linguistic system acquired by learners at a given time between the source language and the target language. By nature, interlanguage is systematic but variable. It is systematic in the sense that interlanguage is structured and rule-governed in a consistent way, and it is variable because of the fact that interlanguage represents constant changes both horizontally and vertically. Simply because of its variability, interlanguage is usually understood as a continuum between the source language and the target language, along which a learner's knowledge of the target language is located.

2.2 Interlanguage pragmatics—A study of L2/FL use and acquisition

In comparison with interlanguage phonology, syntax and semantics, interlanguage pragmatics is still a young discipline (Rose & Kasper, 2001), and interlanguage pragmatics is defined as follows:

a. ... the investigation of non-native speakers' comprehension and production of speech acts, and the acquisition of L2-related speech act knowledge. (Kasper & Dahl, 1991)

b. … the study of nonnative speakers' comprehension, production, and acquisition of linguistic action in L2, or, put briefly, ILP (interlanguage pragmatics) investigates "how to do things with words" in a second language. (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993)

c. … the study of nonnative speakers' use and acquisition of L2 pragmatic knowledge. (Kasper & Rose, 1999)

The definitions given above by Kasper and other scholars underwent certain modifications. But however modified, two basic points are assumed. Firstly, interlanguage pragmatics is concerned with language in use, that is, language as action intended by nonnative L2/FL learners. Secondly, interlanguage pragmatics studies the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge and competence of the targeted L2/FL by nonnative learners.

With its orientation on language use, interlanguage pragmatics directs its focus on the contrastive and descriptive analysis of learner/native speaker differences in the range and contextual distribution of strategies and linguistic forms used to convey illocutionary meaning and politeness (Barron, 2003). As Bardovi-Harlig (1999) sees it, research in this line is mainly about the actual speech acts realized, the choice of semantic formulas employed to realize a particular speech act, the content of these semantic formulas and the form which these realizations take. Interlanguage pragmatics in this perspective has stemmed from cross-cultural pragmatics. Research in interlanguage pragmatic use abounds.

Pragmatic acquisition is the other scope of interlanguage pragmatics and second language acquisition is an insightful parent discipline in this area. Interlanguage pragmatics in this regard is devoted to the acquisitional and developmental analysis of nonnative speakers' learning L2/FL pragmatics in the natural or foreign language context in order to detect development patterns and the factors which influence interlanguage pragmatic development. Research in interlanguage pragmatic acquisition is rare, for it has been largely neglected.

2.3 Interlanguage pragmatics as a field of pragmatics

Interlanguage pragmatics is introduced by analogy with interlanguage syntax, interlanguage semantics and interlanguage lexicon. As a subfield of pragmatics, interlanguage pragmatics possesses the same academic and disciplinary positions as sociopragmatics, cognitive pragmatics, cross-cultural pragmatics, and other branches in pragmatics, and this quality of "interfacing" between pragmatics and other subjects just reveals the multi-disciplinarity of pragmatics as a science of communication in the domain of linguistics.

Communication occurs in society, between or among people with the same or different ages, sexes, social rankings, beliefs, cognitive resources, races, nationalities and cultures. Differences, whether they are any of the parameters mentioned above, may exert

some influences on communication. Thus, we say that communication is a very complex process. When it comes to the communication with people of different nationalities, who speak different languages, interlanguage pragmatics is involved. Thus, it is necessary and significant for interlanguage pragmatics to become a disciplinary itself.

On this account, interlanguage pragmatics is to be classified as a subject of pragmatics. It draws on the insights from both pragmatics and second language acquisition.

❸ Interlanguage pragmatics research in the theoretical perspective

Much of the research on interlanguage pragmatic development has been descriptive rather than motivated or guided by any particular theoretical orientation. In many cases, theoretical positions have been appealed to as post-hoc explanations of findings rather than serving as the basis for the design and conduct of the study in question (Rose & Kasper, 2001). It is true that most of the researches conducted so far involve the speech act theory, the politeness theory or implicature theory, but these theories are treated as the object of the study, not the theoretical frameworks guiding the whole learning process of nonnative learners in L2/FL pragmatics. Whether they are the frameworks or constructs for the study in question or post-hoc explanations, three main theoretical perspectives are considered here.

3.1 The acculturation model

The acculturation model was proposed by Schumann in 1978. Acculturation, which is generally defined as "the process of becoming adapted to a new culture" (Brown, 2002), is seen by Schumann as governing the extent to which learners achieve target-language norms. Schumann points out that "second language acquisition is just one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language."

The acculturation model recognizes the developmental nature of L2 acquisition and seeks to explain differences in learners' rate of development and also in their ultimate level of achievement in terms of the extent to which they adapt to the target language culture. Schumann made a 10-month observation of how his subject, Alberto, acquired English grammar. Alberto was an adult Costa Rican man who worked as an unskilled laborer in the United States. His interlanguage grammar did not advance as desired and his lack of development can not be explained by his cognitive development or other factors such as age, etc. Schumann contended that Alberto's speech manifested very similar properties to those found in pidgins. It was the similarity between Alberto's learner language and pidgins

that led Schumann to propose this acculturation hypothesis to account for the pidginized interlanguage of individual second language learners (Ellis, 1994). Thus, for Schumann, lack of acculturation determines one's lack of development in interlanguage grammar.

3.2 Cognitive processing

In early 1990s, cognitive-psychological theories were introduced into second language acquisition to account for L2 learning processes. This trend in theoretical orientation was also applied to explain how L2 pragmatics was acquired and developed. Two approaches are influential. One is the noticing hypotheses proposed by Schmidt (1993), the other is the two-dimensional model of L2 proficiency development formulated by Bialystok (1993).

The noticing hypotheses is concerned with input processing and the attentional conditions required for input to become intake. According to Schmidt, not all input has equal value and only the input which is noticed becomes available for intake and effective processing. For it to be noticed and made available for further processing, input has to be registered under attention and detected under awareness. In other words, language learning is conscious. Instead of denying the role of unconscious processes in language comprehension and production, Schmidt claims that conscious processing is a necessary condition for one step in the language learning process and is facilitative for other aspects of learning (Schmidt, 1990). The concept of consciousness, as Schmid conceives it, is understood in three senses: consciousness as awareness, consciousness as intention and consciousness as knowledge. For noticing to occur in the process of language learning in the form of attention, global alertness to input is not sufficient and attention has to be allocated to specific learning objects, in other words, it must be particularly focused.

The two-dimensional model proposed by Bialystok explains the development of already available knowledge along the dimensions of analyzed representation and control of processing. For short, analysis and control are the cores of this model. By "analysis," according to Bialystok, is meant that the process by which mental representations of this knowledge are built up, structured, and made explicit for the learner. The definition of "control" given by Bialystok has undergone some changes. Initially, it concerns with the ease and rapidity with which the knowledge can be accessed in differing types of language use. Later, Bialystok conceived it as referring to three different functions: the selection of items of knowledge, their co-ordination, and the extent to which selection and co-ordination can be carried out automatically. With pragmatics, Bialystok contends that children's primary learning task is to develop analytic representations of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge, whereas adult L2 learners mainly have to acquire processing control over already existing representations.

3.3 Language socialization

Language socialization comprises "socialization through the use of language" and "socialization to use language." It is proposed as a linguistic-anthropological perspective on developmental psychology. According to Schieffelin & Ochs (1986), language socialization is defined as "the process whereby children and other novices are socialized through language, part of such socialization being a socialization to use language meaningfully, appropriately, and effectively." As an approach to the development of cultural and communicative competence, language socialization lays emphasis on the complex social context that functions in important ways in people's cognitive and social activities. This approach states that language learning is a process of becoming a member of a sociocultural group and by engaging in the socioocultural practices of the group, newcomers gradually appropriate the languaculture needed to be considered an insider (Willett, 1995). It is a fact that together with human hominization, human socialization takes place. When a child is born in a specific society, his socializing process begins, with language as his/her socializing medium. Through the language, he/she gets socialized and becomes a "social man" with the social features of the society in which he/she belongs. Also, the socializing process itself drives him/her to acquire and learn the language meaningfully, appropriately and effectively. We know that the social world into which human beings enter is constantly changing, therefore people as social beings are always adjusting their socializations to meet new needs. Because of this, language learning or language socialization is a life-long process.

Language socialization is a social-cultural concept. In this process, individuals transform themselves by taking on specific social roles and then get to be ethnographic in terms of a specific society. It is assumed that the language socialization perspective integrates sociocultural theories as one of its theoretical foundations, it is anthropological, rather than psychological or psycholinguistic.

In educational context, the learners are language-socialized in order to acquire and master the targeted language. L1 language socialization usually presents the chances for learners to acquire their mother tongue without much difficulty, for their language socialization process occurs in the natural context. But problems often occur with L2 language socialization, especially in FL context. There are no exact standards for the learners to be assessed as being sufficiently language-socialized in terms of culture and language itself. As the language socialization studies conducted in JFL(Japanese as Foreign Language) classrooms show, settings for foreign language education sometimes constitute their own cultural world, or community of practice, set apart from the target community (Kasper & Rose, 2002).

❹ Interlanguage pragmatics research in the empirical perspective

Interlanguage pragmatics research started in the 1980s. Although the body of research on data-based acquisitional enquiries of L2/FL pragmatics is small, there is a fairly large bulk of research on contrastive and observational studies of L2/FL learners' use and learning of pragmatics. The three stages and orientations in interlanguage pragmatics research contribute to the development of this subject as an important domain of pragmatics.

4.1 Contrastive studies

Contrastive studies refer to the studies conducted for the purpose of comparing the pragmatic features of different languages and finding the commonalities and particularities of the languages involved. This area of pragmatic research has enriched and is covered in the scope of cross-cultural pragmatics. It is true that interlanguage pragmatics has as its source much of the work in cross-cultural pragmatics. It is more so in the early stages of the development of interlanguage pragmatics research. The most important and influential work in cross-cultural pragmatics is the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP, for short) designed and led by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989). In this project, two speech acts, request and apology, are investigated in Hebrew, Canadian French, Argentinian Spanish and Australian English. The findings reveal that although there are differences in the structural and strategic patterns in the realization of these two speech acts among the different languages, some pragmatic features are universal, such as that of being conventionally indirect for the sake of politeness, etc. Contrastive studies of speech act realizations of English and Chinese are also conducted in Chinese context. Zhang and Wang (1997) investigates the pragmatic features in Chinese requestive performances in comparison with those of English delineated in CCSARP. They find that 1) structures are similar in Chinese and English, 2) social variables like power, distance, degree of imposition, age and sex affect the strategic choices in requesting behaviours, 3) conventional indirectness is the most common and polite strategic choice in Chinese, and 4) the usage of alerters and supportive moves represent Chinese socio-cultural features. Yao and Qiu (2003) conducts another contrastive study of the requestive performances in Chinese and English. The baseline strategic norms in English are also those given in CCSARP. The main finding in their study runs counter to those in Zhang and Wang' study in that the most common strategic norm for request by Chinese is directness.

4.2 Observational studies

The observational studies in interlanguage pragmatics discussed here are classroom-based. By "observational" is meant that these studies focus primarily on classroom

processes without a view to learning outcomes or with learning outcomes being analyzed as emerging in and through classroom interaction (Rose & Kasper, 2006). The early observational studies are directed to the language use rather than pragmatic development in classroom setting. Thus, they are nondevelopmental. The first observational study conducted by Long et al (1976) specifically examined speech acts and discourse functions, with its focus on the opportunities for conversational practices in the teacher-fronted lockstep format and pair work. The first study to trace learners' development of pragmatic ability in a second language classroom was Rod Ellis (1992). By observing the requests of two beginning ESL learners for a period of two years, Ellis proposed three stages for evolvement of the learners' ability in requestive performances: 1) context-dependency, minimalist realizations and direct formulaic expressions, 2) unanalyzed routines, and 3) analyzed realizations. Zhang (2010) is an observational study, whose purpose is to explore whether the speech act of "advice" in English textbooks used by Chinese learners is represented relatively well in respect to English native speakers' intuition. It is found that in distribution of response types, there is a significant numerical difference between the two samples.

4.3 Interventional studies

Interventional studies are "experimental researches" which are typified by instruction in specific pragmatic features for the purpose of testing the effectiveness of instruction on the acquisition and development of learners' pragmatic ability. These studies are grounded in pragmatic theory and research, and, in some cases, in pedagogical approaches. Studies of this kind may be devoted to the investigation of the effectiveness of different approaches in the instructional acquisition or development of pragmatic ability. Wildner-Bassett's study (1984) is one example in this case. However, there have been changes in theoretical orientation in recent interventional studies. There is now a noticeable shift toward engaging SLA theory and research in interventional studies of acquisitional and developmental issues in interlanguage pragmatics. The noticing hypotheses (Schmid, 1993), is just one important theory that informs the current interventional studies in interlanguage pragmatics.

Among the instructional studies of the acquisition and development of English pragmatics in L2/FL context are Tateyama (2001), Takahashi (2001), Rose and Ng (2001), Hu Meixin (2004) , Li Min and Chen Xinren (2007), and Li Haifeng (2010), to mention only a few.

⑤ Conclusion

The key to language teaching and learning in L2/FL context has been found to be the

acquisition and development of the so-called pragmatic awareness and competence intended by the learners of various backgrounds. As has been conducted in the academic sense, interlanguage pragmatics is just a discipline which is a study of how language is acquired or developed in L2 or foreign language context in terms of its pragmatics for communicative purposes. This article reviewed what has been carried out in this field so that the researches in interlanguage pragmatics were expounded as they were in the characterizational, theoretical and empirical perspectives. The past findings have been made known, but it is a bare fact that much still needs to be explored in interlanguage pragmatics.

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