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PRAGMATICS – George Yule

1. DEFINITIONS AND BACKGROUND

2. *"The study of **contextual meaning** communicated by a speaker or writer, and interpreted by a listener or reader." (G.Yule)*

3. *"The study of the relation of signs to their*

interpreters." *(Charles Morris)*

4. *"The study of the relations between linguistic forms and its users(...)Only pragmatics allows humans into the analysis: their assumptions, purposes, goals, and actions they perform while speaking." (G.Yule)*

1-   THE STUDY OF SPEAKER MEANING

WHAT PEOPLE MEAN *by their utterances rather than what the words or phrases might mean by themselves.*

3-The study of how more gets communicated than said.

- The **INFERENCES** made by listeners or readers in order to arrive at an interpretation of the intended meaning.

- A great deal of what is ***UNSAID*** is recognized as part of what is communicated.

The study of ***"invisible meaning"***

4-The study of the expression of relative distance

- The **CLOSENESS** or **DISTANCE** of the listener or reader determines how much needs to be said.

For example:

A: there is a store over there (Let's go inside) B: no (I don't want to go inside)

A: why not? (why do you not want to go inside?) B: I'm tired. (I don't want to because I'm tired.)

IN OTHER WORDS…

PRAGMATICS studies HOW PEOPLE MAKE SENSE OF EACH OTHER LINGUISTICALLY.

For example:

A: So_ did you?

B: Hey_ who wouldn't?

Two friends in a conversation may imply some things and infer some others without providing any clear linguistic evidence. So, pragmatics requires us to make sense of what people have in mind.

2.DEIXIS and DISTANCE

- **DEIXIS: "pointing via langauge"**

To accomplish this pointing we use *deictic expressions* or *indexicals.*

i.e: "What's that?" (used to indicate sth. in the immediate context.)

Deictic expressions depend on the speaker and hearer sharing the same spatial context, in face-to face spoken interaction.

Types of **indexicals**

- ➢ Person deixis: used to point people. (*me, you)*
- ➢ Spatial deixis: used to point location (here, there).
- ➢ Temporal dexis: used to point location in time (now, then).

i.e: "I'll put **this here**, ok?"

PERSON DEIXIS

There are 3 categories:

- SPEAKER (I)

- ADDRESSEE (YOU)

- OTHERS (HE- SHE-IT- THEY)

SOCIAL DEIXIS: forms used to indicate relative social status. In many languages deictic categories become markers of relative social status.

HONORIFICS: expressions that mark that the addressee is of higher status.

Examples of SOCIAL DEIXIS

- The choice of one form will communicate something, not directly said, about the speaker's view of his relation with the addressee.

- The higher, older and more powerful speaker will tend to use the "tú" and viceversa.

- Nowadays, the age distinction remains more powerful than the economic distinction in many countries.

SPATIAL DEIXIS

Forms used to point to

LOCATION

i.e: "Here" and "There" "Come" and "Go"

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE

When speakers mark how **close** or **distant** something is perceived to be.

i.e: *"That man over there"* implies psychological distance.

DEICTIC PROJECTION: when

speakers act as if they are somewhere else.

i.e: *"I´m not here now."* (telephone answering machine)

Recording is a performance for a future audience in which I project my presence to be in the required location

TEMPORAL   DEIXIS

Forms used to point to location **in time. i.e: *"now" - "then"***

In contrast to ***now***, the distal expression ***then*** applies to both past and future time relative to the speaker's present time.

i.e: *"I was in Scotland then" "I'll see you then"*

3. REFERENCE AND INFERENCE

REFERENCE: an act in which a speaker or writer, uses linguistic forms to enable a listener or reader, to identify something.

Words in themselves do not refer anything. People refer.

REFERRING EXPRESSIONS: linguistic forms like proper nouns, definite or indefinite noun phrases, and pronouns.

The choice of one type of these expressions rather than another is based on what the speaker assumes the listener already knows.

FOR EXAMPLE:

"Look at him" (use of pronoun)

"The woman in red" (definite article)

"A woman was looking at you" (indefinite article and pronoun)

❖ So, reference is tied to the speaker's goals and beliefs about the listener knowledge in the use of language.

INFERENCE

- For successful reference to occur, we must recognize the role of **INFERENCE and COLLABORATION** between speaker and listener in thinking what the other has in mind.

Sometimes we use vague expressions relying on the listener's ability to infer what referent we have in mind:

i.e: *"The blue thing", "That stuff"*

We sometimes even invent names.

THE ROLE OF CO-TEXT

Co- text: the linguistic environment in which a word is used.

The co-text clearly limits our range of possible interpretations we might have for a word.

i.e: "Brazil wins World Cup"

Brazil would be the referring expression, and the rest of the sentence the co-text.

CO- TEXT

Just a linguistic part of the environment in which a referring expression is used

CONTEXT

- The physical environment in which a word is used.

ANAPHORIC REFERENCE

The expressions used to maintain reference to something or someone already mentioned.

i.e: "A man was looking at us. *He* then disappeared."

The initial reference is often indefinite (A man...) and is called the **ANTECEDENT.**

The subsequent reference is definite or a prononun (He...) and is called **ANAPHORA.**

6. SPEECH ACTS and EVENTS

- Actions performed via utterances are called

Speech Acts.

In English they are commonly known as: **apology, compliment, complaint, invitation, promise, or request** and apply to the speaker's communicative intention.

- The circumstances surrounding the utterance are called the **Speech Event** and it's their nature that determines the interpretation of an utterance as performing a particular speech act.

- *This tea is really cold!"*

- This utterance can be interpreted as a complaint or as a praise, depending on the circumstances. (If it is winter or summer, a cold or a hot day, etc.)

DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS

- **DIRECT:** when there's a direct relationship between the structure (declarative, interrogative, imperative) and its communicative function (statement, question, commnad/request.)

- **INDIRECT:** Indirect relation between the structure and function.