

PRAGMATICS AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Introduction:

Since Pragmatics is a theory of language performance and language understanding, it inescapably, overlaps with many neighboring areas of linguistics. Among these related areas, there are pedagogical linguistics and educational linguistics that are directly related with language learning and teaching. In language teaching, social interaction is very important because it is mostly culturally based, governing our choice of language. In this article, the close relationship between pragmatics, which is another related area of linguistics, and language teaching, will be taken up, and the results of such a beneficial connection will be analysed.

THE ESSENCE OF PRAGMATICS

Pragmatics is defined as the study of the meaning of language utterances with respect to their contexts. In the make-up of meaning there are many bundles of features because we follow a great number of social rules which constraint the way we speak since certain pragmatic factors always influence our selection of sounds, vocabulary items, and other grammatical constructions. Pragmatics places emphasis on real language use, which necessitates the codification of the full range of functions of language in social contexts. That's why it overlaps with many other neighboring areas of linguistics. Thus, this case boils down to the realisation of the fact that Pragmatics unearths how far the social and situational contexts affect understanding of language and its use. In addition, it expounds the pragmatic meaning, which is the grasp of meaning from the array of sentences in the context, just like the National-functional approach tries to do, but which can be unearthed only by pragmatics and its techniques.

THE COMPONENTS OF PRAGMATICS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

In the field of language teaching, pragmatics must not be confused with semantics. Semantics is a study of meaning which directly depends on the meaning of words and linguistic constructions themselves, whereas pragmatics handles the

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meaning of utterances that come from the context, themselves. So pragmatics is one step ahead of semantics. They are complementary to each other, the job of pragmatics starts out at the point where semantics ends up. In the field of language teaching, pragmatics has important components, **pragmalinguistics**, **psychopragmatics**, and **sociopragmatics**. The analysis of these three areas yield to valuable insight to language teaching.

THE FUNCTION OF PRAGMALINGUISTICS

The combination of grammar with pragmatics has produced an area of study called pragmalinguistics. Pragmalinguistics produces practical explanations on grammar, and tries to find the most suitable and practical structures for utterances in a language for teaching purposes. It is also a sub-branch of applied linguistics because it tries to develop and recommend the best method of use in a language. So, pragmalinguistics presents methods and theories to be applied in language teaching, and describes how we must use them in a language in a correct way. It has also shown a good explanation of deixis.

THE FUNCTION OF SOCIOPRAGMATICS

Sociopragmatics is concerned with the language learning and acquisition of children and non-native learners of foreign languages. It works with informational source and shows how this information can be practically and effectively utilized. It also brings theories, approaches, and principles to the language teaching area. It searches how to prepare, organise or set a lesson plan. Also, it provides the ways of making a lesson or a course design to be memorable, productive easily learnable, understandable. Then, it contributes to methodology. In addition, it provides implications, testable background, and verification to material development in language teaching courses.

THE FUNCTION OF SOCIOPRAGMATICS

This is a recombination of sociolinguistics with pragmatics. It studies the local conditions on language use, being a sociological interface of pragmatics. It unearths the culture-specific background of language learning. It emphasises how physical setting is important in a teaching process of foreign languages. We must remember here the words of B. Malinowsky: meaning is not a passive contemplation of thought but a clear-cut reference to a given culture, because each word is created by that society to meet its societal needs in a specific content. Words come into being through the need-filling motive of each language.

Sociopragmatics also entails the assignment of varied values to the principles and maxims used in a language. Moreover, it deals with the group acquisition of a language (something like Community Language Learning, Total Physical Response, etc). It is also concerned with the communicative use of language in different social

situations. In addition, it clarifies the basic features and difficulties of the Speech Act Theory of pragmatics and expounds the social difficulties encountered in the act of speech. In a way, it shows the ways of bestowing the words into their meaningful settings so that words and their related associations fit into each other. Then, it fills in the gap where the grammatical rules fail to explain the speech acts.

Contrastive Pragmatics, on the other hand, is of great use to unsolve the cross-cultural problems that give hard times to language learners and teachers. Contrastive pragmatics is highly, potential to provide beneficial information at the junctions where in the grammatical rules fall short to clear the situations. Cultural values, setting, and mannerisms come in to remove this type of dead-ends in language teaching. Thus, sociopragmatics, by nature, explains how, through our communicative competence, we use linguistic features to make successful pragmatic matches between the utterances and verbal behavior.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PRAGMATICS TO LANGUAGE TEACHING AREA

In this respect, one of the major contributions of pragmatics has been to direct attention once again to actual language use, which was neglected by Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG henceforth). That is why pragmatics was set up to answer the short-comings of TGG in which the communicative competence of a speaker is not very important than the communicative performance. Because in TGG the native speaker knows the grammaticality of the sentences, can detect ambiguity, anomaly, synonymy of sentences, or he can utter an infinite number of sentences: it is very clear that TGG deals much more with communicative competence.

In a detailed and systematic attack on TGG, John W. Oller has questioned "the validity and usefulness of such concepts as competence, deep structures and surface structures, and offered pragmatics as an alternative to TGG because it placed emphasis on real language use. He wanted to see the notion of deep structure re-interpreted as meanings, relation between situational settings (referents, actions, events, abstract concepts, etc.) and linguistic forms rather than relations between sentences and underlying sentences" (H.H. Stern, 1984: 177). Chomsky's basic assumption is that language is a self contained system. 'Inborn ideas' constitute the basic ground for language learning. "But there is no discoverable relation between deep structures and situational setting. On this basis that I have proposed a pragmatic theory of language as an alternative to Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar Approach" John W. Oller, 1973: 47). Here the innate ideas look like the principles of association and generalisation constructed into a complex sensory mechanism and an abstract memory space." It is because of the relation which linguistic forms to extralinguistic settings that William James spoke of the 'cash value of words'. This value is

set by the rules of usage which govern what people say in order to convey meaning" (John W. Oller, 1973: 47). Then, this type of pragmatic attitude reacts against Chomskian generative grammar where in the ideal native speaker-hearer is not a speaking subject but a mind (born with a computer in the head) that identifies with the neurobiological structure of the brain.

PRAGMATICS AND SOME OTHER RELATED AREAS

It is important to use the language creatively and correctly, to use words and sentences in both meaningful and structural settings. To achieve this aim, pragmatics works with Applied Linguistics in the language teaching area. It supplies certain theories, suggests the ways of practical usage in the classroom: so it is both a guide and a safeguard to language teaching since it helps in reforming and improving classroom practices of language teachers.

Since pragmatics is a study of language use and context, the writing of practical grammars is vivified through real language use. It answers such questions like, which type of exercises would be appropriate to grammatical drills, at which levels should they be prepared? Then it is very obvious that pragmatics by nature is the real background for the pedagogical grammars.

Pragmatics also stresses the importance of courses on speaking foreign languages. Then the students should take part in class to develop his communicative competence. So, "pragmatics defines the goal of teaching a language as inducing the student not merely to manipulate the meaningless sound sequences, but to send and receive messages in the target language. The necessary and sufficient means for achieving this objective is the involvement of the student in creative communication in the target language (John W. Oller, 1973: 47-48). This way pragmatics can provide solutions to communication problems by searching methods and principles for language teaching to how do we teach to a learner a language to communicate.

We can see the practical results of pragmatics on textbooks produced on notional-functional lines. The concept, known as presupposition or conversational implicature, derived from Philosophy, has entered the EFL textbook. In such dialogues, conversations follow a predictable format; by filling in the blanks type of attitude speaker/hearers' turns are selected from a number of commonly used types. By way of pragmatic implicatures, better controlled dialogues can be devised for conversation classes. This is obviously a pragmatic analysis of daily, normal predictable language usage.

According to John W. Oller, "Pragmatics has definite implications for theories of language learning and methods of language teaching. With respect to material construction, for instance, it indicates the structures selected should be presented in meaningful contexts where oral sequences of events are observed. It also indicates that

pattern drills should be designed so that instead of manipulating purely abstract elements of a verbal calculus-usually a point in syntax- the student should be using language in response to a paradigm of situations instead of concentrating on the words coming out of his mouth, he should be thinking about his ideas in his head he wishes to communicate" (John W. Oller, 1973: 47-48).

The differentiation made between semantics and pragmatic factors establishes a natural basis for the explanation of some of the difficulties in translations." For many of the difficulties which undoubtedly do arise in translating from language to language, particularly when cultures are involved are widely divergent, will no necessarily affect the universal status of semantic components, since these difficulties may be explained at the level of pragmatics, not by the formal mechanism of semantic theory" (Ruht M. Kempson, 1977: 101)

In general, discourse analysis rules in expressing politeness, greetings, and other verbal behavior, and all of which is of potential input for the language learner to see the differences in the target language. For example, when German and English languages are compared it has been discovered that German speakers in making requests and complaints significantly behave more directly, and are less polite than the English ones. In fact, among the European languages it is the English language that uses that uses the word please, as an expression of kindness and respect, the most frequently in speech. "textual conventions similarly vary in different languages: written Arabic, for instance, makes little if any distinction between sentences and paragraphs, and punctuation conventions, therefore, differ considerably between Arabic and English (Micheal Stubbs, 1988: 38).

In terms of Applied Pragmatics, it is very obvious that pragmatics has practical and potential applications to all fields with a stock in how utterances are decoded and then underskood by language users and learners. Being in close contact with discourse analysis, such fields also include the study of rhetoric and literature. It is because of this inclination of pragmatics that this field or study is known the problem-solving area of linguistics.

Pragmatics, by nature and by definition, preaches practicality, applicatability, and usefulness to the purpose. For this reason it has a high potentiality to cast light on a premature acceptance and application of untested concepts and theories of sociolinguistics, pedagogical linguistics, language planning, nationwide curriculum design to educational practices. For intance, around 1988s, Turkish Ministry of Education had favored the **Basamaklı Kur** type of language teaching design for the secondary schools and high schools of Turkey, yet this practice was not tried by the technicalities of pragmatics, neither was there a pilot-application of it. The result of this nationwide application of Basamaklı Kur was a great fiasco, and so many students suffered from this inadequate efficiency of the untested methodology. So, it is clear that

pragmatics is an integral part of educational linguistics as well. Here, then, pragmatics has a task to point out the limitations of current approaches, language teaching theories, and demonstrate and illuminate the empirical basis for the working categories, techniques, and methods utilized and practised at all levels of teaching.

CONSLUSION

The contribution of pragmatics to language teaching is, thus, undeniable. Pragmatics, in essence, is a study of language and language teaching from the functional perspective; that is, the performance principles of language are practised. It is because of this reason that pragmatics becomes a theory of linguistic performance and language understanding. A clear case of such an explanation is seen in the analysis of the "cash value of words", which is established by the rules of usage. The "cash value of words" is not only dependent on usage but also on different registers of language such as situational settings, colloquial usage, jargons and others that heavily depend on context. In addition, when the "cash value of words" are added up to the words as an extra burden, the rules of usage cannot be easily solved by the help taken from pragmatics, which investigates the cases of meaning in the widest possible sense. It must be born in mind that Speech Act Theory of pragmatics has been very fruitful in explaining the attitudes of language users to arrive at the deep structure of the meaning of words.

Pragmalinguistics, psychopragmatics, and sociopragmatics produce highly valuable material for language teachers to promote their language teaching activities by practical and applicable techniques, methods, and approaches. They also show beneficial directions in reforming and improving the classroom practice. They even help the speech pathologists to advance the cases of brain-damaged patients. So, pragmatics has taken down the barriers between language and language production. It has also prepared the collapse of the TGG grammar which abstracted the ideal native speaker/hearer by receiving help from textlinguistics and discourse analysis which, too, refused the limitatiton of linguistics to sentence grammar.

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