

## Kişilerarası İletişimde Edimbilimin Önemi

## The Importance Of Pragmatics In Interpersonal Communication

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### ÖZET

Hayatımızın vazgeçilmezi olan iletişim doğumdan ölüme kadar devam eder. Her halükarda iletişim vardır. İletişimin tanımı farklı alanlara göre farklı olarak yapılmıştır. İnsanlar arası iletişimde en yaygın iletişim türü söz ile yani dil ile gerçekleştirilen iletişimidir. İletişimin en önemli olgularından birisi olan dil ise insanlık var olduğundan beri süregelenmiştir. Kişinin, grubun ya da toplumun ihtiyaçlarına göre gelişen, kelimeler eklenen ya da çıkartılan dil aynı zamanda ait olunan kültürün de bir yansımasıdır. Her toplumun bir kültürü vardır, buradaki kültür olgusu toplumu oluşturan bireylerin genel olarak kültürlerinin toplamı ya da yansımasıdır. Ancak sağlıklı iletişim kurabilmek demek yalnızca dildeki kelimelerin bir araya getirilip cümleler kurulması değildir. Bu noktada konuşmacının karşısındaki hedef kişi, bu kişinin kültürü, kimliği, algılama yetisi, konuşmanın yer aldığı ortam, ses tonu, konunun bağlamı gibi unsurlar çok önemli rol oynar.

Edimbilim, dilbilimin alt alanıdır, kelime ve cümlelerin içeriğe göre anlam kazanmasıdır. Bir başka deyişle, edimbilim kelimelerin ötesindeki anlamları anlamamıza yardımcı olur ve bu konu üzerinde çalışır. Edimbilim görünmeyen anlamı ortaya çıkarır. Bu tanımdan yola çıkarak kullanılan her bir kelime ya da her bir cümle karşılıklı görüşmeye olumlu ya da olumsuz anlamlar yükleyebilir. Kelime ya da cümlelerin anlamları metine, konuşmadaki geçtiği yere, kültüre, kişinin kimliğine, konuşmanın geçtiği yere, ses tonuna ve konuşmanın bütünlüğüne göre farklılıklar gösterebilir. Sağlıklı iletişim kurabilmenin temel taşlarından birisi de edimbilimin kavranmasıdır.

İletişimde bulunan her iki tarafın da amacı karşı tarafa mesajlarını başarılı bir şekilde aktarmak ise, o zaman kullandıkları ifadelerin karşı tarafta nasıl bir etki yaratabileceğini dikkate almalıdırlar. Tarafların arasındaki samimiyet kelime ve cümle seçiminde belirleyici olacaktır. Tarafların samimiyet derecesi kullandıkları ifadelerden çıkartılabilir. Aynı kültürden ya da farklı kültürden olan insanların bir olayı açıklamaları ya da tanımlamalarında kendilerine özgü yolları vardır fakat burada en önemli olan husus karşı tarafla olan ortak noktayı en üst seviyede yakalamaktır. İletişimde yer alan insanların dilsel, dini, ırksal ve etnik kökenleri kelime seçiminde önemli rol oynar. Kaynak, zihninden geçen mesajları aktarırken karşı tarafın anlama kapasitesini ve mesajı bu şartlar altında çözdüğünü göz önünde bulundurmalıdır. Diğer taraftan alıcı mesajı çözdükten sonra kaynak konumuna geçer, aynı şekilde o da geribildirimde bulunurken dikkatli olmalıdır. Bu bağlamda, aynı kültürü paylaşmak yanlış anlamları azaltacağı gibi, sağlıklı iletişimi engeller, böylece karşı tarafın kültürünü anlamaya çalışmak amaca ulaşmak için avantaj sağlayacaktır. Bu davranış tarzı istenilen mesajı aktarmadaki başarıyı artırır.

Diğer taraftan, uzun cümleler ve tutarsız metinler sıkıntıya sebep olabilir, karşı taraf dikkatini kaybedebilir ve amaçlanan mesajı alamayabilir. Bazen almak istediğimiz karşılık ile aldığımız karşılık arasında hiçbir tutarlılık olmaz (Tubbs & Moss, 2003:22). Mesajı iletmek için açık ve yeteri kadar ifade kullanmak yerinde olacaktır.

Eğer amaç niyet edilen mesajı karşı tarafa başarılı bir şekilde iletmek ise; konuşmacı ve dinleyici üslup, cümle yapısı, sözcük ve ses tonu seçimine özen göstermelidir. İletişimde bulunan her iki taraf içinde edimbilimin önemini fark etmek ve edimbilimi kavramaya yönelik çaba sarf etmek sağlıklı iletişim yolunda faydalı olacaktır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı dilbilimin alt başlıklarından olan edimbilimin iletişimde nasıl bir rol oynadığını göstermek ve sağlıklı iletişim kurabilmenin sadece kelimelerden, cümlelerden ibaret olmadığını vurgulamaktır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** İletişim, Edimbilim, Kültür, Kişilerarası İletişim, Sağlıklı İletişim

**Çalışmanın türü:** Araştırma

### ABSTRACT

Communication, the indispensable reality of our life, takes place from birth to death. It exists in every situation. There are several definitions of communication according to different fields; different definitions of communication are available. The most spread communication is oral communication that is performed by language. One of the most important phenomenon of the communication is language and it continues till the beginning of humanity. Language, being developed, added or omitted words into according to the necessities of individuals, groups or society is reflection of the cultural belonging at the same time. Every society has a culture; here the culture phenomenon is the gathering or the reflection of the individuals' culture. Establishing healthy communication does not mean to create sentences only by composing words together. In this sense, the factors such as the target listener in front of the speaker, culture, identity, understanding capacity of the listener, the place where the speech takes place, the tone of the voice and the cohesion of the speech play very important role.

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics and studies the ways in which context contributes to the meaning of the words and sentences. In other words, pragmatics studies and helps to understand the meanings beyond the words. Pragmatics reveals the invisible meaning. Based on this definition, each word or each sentence used may attribute a positive or negative meaning to negotiation. In other saying, the meaning of words and sentences show varieties according to the factors such as context, the

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parts take place in conversation, the culture, the identity, the place where the speech takes place, the tone of the voice and the cohesion of the speech. One of the keystones to build a healthy communication is the comprehension of pragmatics.

As if the intention of the both parts that take place in communication is transmitting their messages to the other side successfully, they have to take into consideration the effects of their choices on the other part. The sincerity between the parties is the determiner for the choice of the words, sentences. The level of the familiarity might be guessed from the words and sentences they use. People from the same culture or different cultures has their own way to explain or describe the events but the most important point is trying to catch the common points at the highest level as possible as with the other side. The factors such as linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic background of the people that take part in communication play crucial role in the selection of the words of the message. While sender transmitting the messages in the mind to the receiver, s/he should consider the receiver's capacity and encode the messages according to those conditions. On the other hand the receiver after decoding the message will be the sender, and then s/he should be careful about encoding of the feedback. At this point, sharing the same culture decreases the misunderstandings and prohibits unsuccessful communication thus showing effort to understand other side's culture would be advantageous to reach the aim. This kind of behavior increases the success of transmitting the intended message.

On the other side, long sentences and incoherent text may cause trouble as the other side may lose her/his attention and cannot get messages as aimed. Sometimes there is absolutely no correspondence between the response we want to produce and the one we receive (Tubbs & Moss, 2003:22). It would be better to use clear and sufficient expressions.

The speaker and the listener should be careful about choice of genre, sentence structure, lexical items, pronunciation, and tone of voice if the aim is to transfer the intended meaning to the other side successfully. It would be useful for both parts in communication to realize the importance of pragmatics and to save effort to comprehend pragmatics in the way of successful communication.

The aim of this study is to point out the role of pragmatics, one of the subfield of linguistics, in communication and to emphasize healthy communication is not only performed by words or sentences.

**Keywords:** Communication, Pragmatics, Culture, Interpersonal Communication, Healthy Communication

**Type of study:** Research

## Introduction

Communication phenomenon is so crucial in human life. It begins from birth to death; it takes its place every moment of life. Humans are always in communication in their life when they are with other people. Although there is no one, s/he is in communication by her/himself that is intrapersonal communication. As our main topic in this study is the importance of pragmatics in interpersonal communication, the relation between the meaning of the words, sentences and the context, knowledge of pragmatics is the indicator of the successful or unsuccessful communication.

People from the same culture or different cultures has their own way to explain or describe the events but the most important point is trying to catch the common points at the highest level as possible as with the other side. While sender transmitting the messages in the mind to the receiver, s/he should consider the receiver's capacity and encode the messages according to those conditions. On the other hand the receiver after decoding the message will be the sender, and then s/he should be careful about encoding of the feedback. As it is declared by Fisher and Adams (1994:4), a fundamental premise of the pragmatic view of human communication is the identification of observable behaviors as the locus of interest and in connection with this communication is a social system composed not of individuals, but of the ongoing flow of their behaviors.

During this process one of the most important factor is pragmatics that would be useful to take into consideration for successful communication.

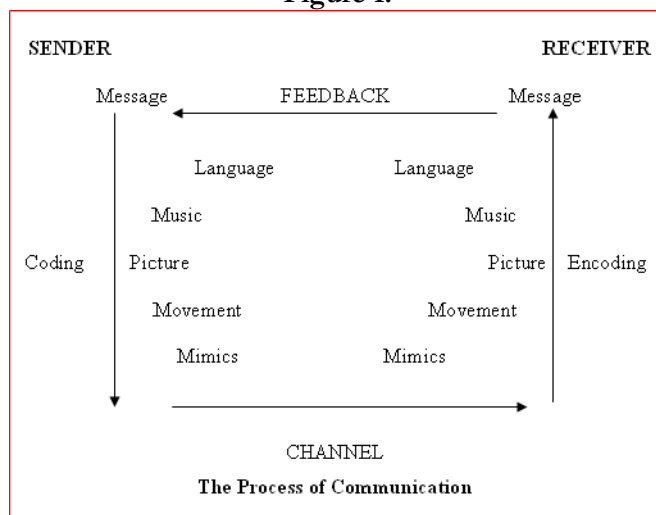
## I. Communication

There are several definitions of communication, according to different fields, different definitions of communication are available. Some scholars take what is referred to as a "receiver perspective" on communication, other scholars take what is referred to as a "sender perspective" on communication (Baldwin et. al., 2004:5). According to Fiske (1990:1) communication is one of those human activities that everyone recognizes but few can define satisfactorily. Communication is talking to one another; it is television, spreading information, hair style, and literary criticism: the list is endless. In fact, historically the term communication is derived from the Latin word, *communis*, which means "to make common" (Frey, 2000:27).

Communication is defined as discourse in rhetorical field. It emphasizes rhetoric especially in political communication and oral communication. It is a mediator using signs in the field of semiotics that is

creating common point between people in sense-making. In phenomenology, communication is the experience of alterity and dialogue. In the field of cybernetics, communication is to go through a process of information. It is defined as interaction, mutual activity, and statement in social psychology. Symbolic interaction approach is the most spread type of definition. In sociological approaches, it is handled as the production or reproduction of social pattern. Concerning to our issue, in communication field, the dominant definition of translation is transmission model which is used in sociological and social-psychological approaches after the mid of 1940. This definition is enlarged by adding elements such as feedback, frame of reference and group effect. But essentially, it is sending and receiving messages between humans (Erdoğan, 2002: 23-25).

**Figure 1.**



As it can be seen in the figure, sender codes his/her message by language, music, picture, movement, and mimics then sends it to receiver by a channel and then the receiver encodes the message. The receiver sends his/her feedback by a channel the communication process exists.

The message model of linguistic communication accounts for certain commonsense features of talk-exchanges: it predicts that communication is healthy when the receiver decodes the same message that the sender encodes; and as a result it predicts that communication breaks down if the decoded message is different from the encoded message (Akmajian et. al., 1997: 346).

In order to make this process more clear, we can compare communication process with translation process. Translation is, of course, a re-writing of an original text, and it is the most obviously recognizable type of re-writing. As Lefevere (1992:9) puts it, it is potentially the most influential because it is able to “project the image of an author and/or a (series of) work (s) in another culture, lifting that author and/or those works beyond boundaries of their culture of origin.” In other words, the act of translation is transporting or recreating the information, thoughts, and senses from Source Language to Target Language. But it is not as simple as seen in the figure or as explanation. A lot of positive or negative factors take place in this process which will be explained under the heading of the importance of pragmatics in interpersonal communication.

At this point we need to mention intercultural communication briefly; the factors such as linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic background of the people that take part in communication play crucial role in the selection of the words of the message. Although in the same nation the parties may have different backgrounds, in other words every human is another world. In relation to culture, then, people may be of the same race but of different cultures: Both France and Australia have within their very different cultures individuals of the same racial ancestry, on the other hand people can be of the same culture but of different races: The United States is a culture of people of all races (Jandt, 1995:9). For example in the universities generally all the students are from Turkey, when we talk about a social subject, a word in the context may have negative effect on some of the receivers and positive effect on the others. As Kim and Gudykunst (1988:12) declare that intercultural communication, basically, is not different from all other

human communication phenomena, it involves communicators, encoding and decoding of verbal and nonverbal messages, and the physical and social environment. The communicator's behavior at a given time reflects his/her experiential background that, in turn, shapes the attributes of his/her internal meaning system.

## II. Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the study of the relation between language and context-of-use. Context-of-use includes the discourse context, and so pragmatics includes studies of how discourses are structured, and how listener manages to interpret a conversational partner in a conversation (Jurafsky & Martin, 2000:667). In other saying, the meaning of words and sentences show varieties according to the factors such as context, the parts take place in conversation, the culture, the identity, the place where the speech takes place, the tone of the voice and the cohesion of the speech.

A persistent goal of pragmatic theory has been the explanation of a speaker's ability to assign interpretations to given utterances in given contexts, and draw inferences from them. What is conveyed by a given message may be (and generally is) far richer than what is said; pragmatic principles must be invoked to bridge this gap (Horn, 2003:381).

The term pragmatics is to cover the study of language use in relation to language structure and context of utterance (Akmajian et. al., 1997: 343). In other words, pragmatics studies and helps to understand the meanings beyond the words. Pragmatics reveals the invisible meaning. Consider a sign in a shopping center "Baby Sale", we can understand that what is for sale is baby wares, there are no babies for sale. Another example to emphasize the importance of the place that the text exist is "Big Earthquake" or "Bankrupt", when such kind of terms are written on the shop windows, the aim is to take the attention of the customers that there is a big discount.

## III. The Importance of Pragmatics in Interpersonal Communication

Although the types of communication are given/divided (Hybels&Weaver, 2001:16-19) as intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, small-group communication, public communication and mass communication, except intrapersonal communication there is another side. It is either one person or more than one person; the speaker should estimate the options, likes and dislikes of the other party.

As we have pointed out several times that there is communication under all circumstances but the most important point is communication is healthy (successful) or not? At this point the saying "what to say? or how to say?" gains importance. The speaker and the listener should be aware of the intention of the other side, most important part of that is supplied by the knowledge of pragmatics. As it is declared by Crystal (cited in, Çelik, 2009:237) pragmatics studies the factors that govern our choices of language in social interaction and the effects of our choices on others

Let's think about the following conversation between two speakers from different cultures:

A: You are my bear!

B: What are you saying, am I a bear?

A: No, I want to say that you are really strong, brave and attractive.

B: Hmmm...

Speaker A is German and behaves according to German culture, and the image bear symbolizes power, braveness etc. in German culture. But the other side, listener B is from Turkish culture and the image bear is rudeness in Turkish culture. So at the beginning of the conversation there is misunderstanding between speaker A and the listener B, then by the explanation of the speaker A, the problem is solved. While this kind of misunderstanding is occurring between two different cultures, the same misunderstanding may exist between the people of the same nation. For example, the saying "our pansy" is generally used in Aegean Region of Turkey in order to reflect the close friendship but this saying is generally misunderstood in Eastern Region of Turkey, as it gives the sense of being a gay at that region.

On the other hand, lets think about the sentence "the door is there!" when we come across such kind of a saying, we firstly think that someone is being dismissed. But the situation may be the opposite, as the

speaker may be an architect or estate agent and showing the location of the door to the customer. Thus, before we make a decision about the conversation, we should think and observe widely in order to prevent the misunderstandings. Another example to show different meanings of a sentence is: the speaker says that “the phone is ringing”, firstly the semantic meaning is “someone is calling” but on the other hand it includes the meanings of “I am busy, answer the phone” or “I want to sleep, turn off the phone” or according to situation various meanings exist. When the speaker asks “have you got any cash on you?” indeed s/he implies “can you lend me some money?” In these examples, the factors such as place and occasion draw the borders of the conversation.

And also the age and the sex factor between the speakers is an important point. The words, sentences may show varieties between the speakers of the different ages and sexes. So it would be better to use common words for the both sides in order to prevent misunderstandings as Çelik (2009:236) declares that pragmatic competence is the ability to use the appropriate linguistic expressions for the intended meaning and purpose according to the rules of conversation.

The most important road to success is communication, according to Ergen (1990:1) successful communication is “to transfer the right thought at the right time to the right person by the right channel”. And also, every communication is a transaction; it focuses on the people who are communicating and the changes that take place in them as they are communicating. Communication events have a past, present and future so the roles the participants play will affect the communication (Hybels&Weaver, 2001:26). Thus, the good communicator has to take those factors into consideration.

More generally, communication is effective when the stimulus as it was initiated and intended by the sender, or source, corresponds closely to the stimulus as it is perceived and responded to by the receiver.

$$R/S = \text{receiver's meaning} / \text{sender's meaning} = 1$$

We rarely reach 1 that is perfect sharing of meaning. Actually, we never reach 1. We approximate it. Sometimes there is absolutely no correspondence between the response we want to produce and the one we receive (Tubbs & Moss, 2003:22). Here again the pragmatics takes its vital role to increase the approximate level.

At this point, there is a need to describe the term shared knowledge. It is used to indicate the common knowledge between the two parts that take place in communication. There are general truths of the world, they are all common, everyone can have the capacity to understand them, for example the world is round, and water boils at 100 C. but some information are local, cultural or personal. In such occasions, the source in communication has to explain and use long sentences in order to prevent misunderstandings. When a speaker says “I took it because it is forbidden”, the listener/s can just guess what has happened, but not exactly if s/he does not take part in such occasion. Indeed the speaker wants to say that “I took my dog from the shopping mall because it is forbidden to take it in” or another example think about a group of people, the speaker says “Lets go to Kafkas this evening!” The speaker wants to meet them at the restaurant named Kafkas for the dinner but just the ones who know the Restaurant Kafkas can understand the speaker’s invitation to dinner. Thus, we can say that sentence length indicates the intimacy of the speaker and the listener; if the sentence length is short then they have high level of shared knowledge but if the sentence length is long then they do not have much in common.

### Conclusion

Communication can easily be accomplished but it is not easily explained. One of the most essential issues in healthy communication is to realize how to say than what to say. At this point the knowledge of pragmatics gains importance. People have different backgrounds, feelings, capacity of comprehensions, ages, sexes thus there are various sense-makings. And also the place, context, situation, relationships close or not, level of education, cultural background, plays important role in communication. As we have insistently emphasized the importance of pragmatics, the negotiators should be aware of ambiguity. People typically encodes only part of their intended message but listeners may flesh out the encoded meaning to yield a much richer meaning (Cruse, 2000:379).

As the messages are not only consisted of words or sentences, the speaker and the listener should be careful about choice of genre, sentence structure, lexical items, pronunciation, and tone of voice if the aim

is to transfer the intended meaning to the other side successfully. It would be useful for both parts in communication to realize the importance of pragmatics and to save effort to comprehend pragmatics in the way of successful communication.

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