



PRAGREV

Pragmatics.Reviews

Online Publication of the
European University VIADRINA

Volume 1, Number 3

September 2013

dx.doi.org/10.11584/pragrev.2013.1.3

ISSN: 2196-2871

www.pragmatics-reviews.org

Are the Theories Applicable to Authentic English in use? A Corpus-based Approach to Theories of Pragmatics in Use

Anne O’Keeffe, Brian Clancy, Svenja Adolphs. 2011. *Introducing Pragmatics in Use*. Oxford: Routledge.

As the title indicates, the goal of *Introducing pragmatics in use* is to present the role of pragmatics to researchers and students who are new to pragmatics. Even for those who are well aware of pragmatics, this book is useful as it covers both pragmatic theories and application based on corpus data. Corpus-based approaches have not been so active in the field of pragmatics. *Introducing pragmatics in use* consists of eight chapters covering important topics in pragmatics and providing ample examples. By the help of written and spoken examples from various corpora, this book tries to provide aspects of authentic pragmatic English along with numerous figures and tables. The further readings suggested at the end of each chapter also are helpful.

In the first chapter, the authors introduce pragmatics in general and the structure of the book as a whole. The authors start this chapter with a question: “What is pragmatics?” Although there are many different definitions of pragmatics, the authors provide a user-friendly definition of pragmatics suggested by Fasold (1990: 119): “the study of the use of context to make inferences about meaning.” According to the authors, the key concept of pragmatics is that the available evidence is provided by the context within which the utterance takes place; thus, contexts should be the primary source in understanding utterances. There is a brief overview of the book, followed by a general explanation of corpus linguistics. The authors focus on the advantages of using data from corpora in pragmatics. Examples of corpus word frequency lists, keyword lists, and concordance lines are given. This chapter is particularly interesting to readers who are new to corpus linguistics.

Chapter 2 reviews the major research methods in pragmatics. The authors then use five diverse case studies to show specific approaches including eliciting data through discourse completion tasks (DCTs), role-plays, interviews, questionnaires, and the use of a corpus. The authors discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each of them. The overview of research methods used in the field of pragmatics is particularly important for graduate students and young researchers.

Deixis is the topic of Chapter 3. Here deixis is defined as "the way in which speakers orient both themselves and their listeners in relation to the context of a conversation" (p. 36).

According to the authors, deixis represents the intersection of pragmatics and grammar as may be demonstrated by personal pronouns (*I, you*), demonstratives (*this, that*), adverbs of time (*now, then*), adverbs of space (*here, there*), motion verbs (*come, go*), and a variety of other grammatical items are included in this chapter. English grammar teachers can find useful information in this chapter since deixis is known to be a great challenge for language learners.

"Politeness in context" is the subject of the following chapter. It reminds that contexts are essential in dealing with politeness. It starts with background information on Goffman's notion of "face" and "face threatening acts," Grice's co-operative principle (CP), and Brown and Levinson's model of politeness. The corpus-based examples help to explain positive politeness, negative politeness, and impoliteness. A more recent theory suggested by Watts is compared and contrasted with Brown and Levinson's traditional model of politeness as is Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory with the Gricean co-operation theory.

As Austin (1962) pointed out, the speaker's utterance often has power over the hearer to do something. Chapter 5, "Speech acts in context", gives an overview on speech act theories suggested by Austin (1962) and Searle (1975). Austin's locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts are introduced, and Searle's distinction between direct and indirect speech acts is explained. In the middle of the chapter, the authors explain how to identify and analyze speech acts using several examples.

Looking at different cultures, pragmatics shows up a certain diversity. For example, it is well known that Asians' pragmatic refusal is more indirect and lengthy than Americans'. Chapter 6 treats pragmatics across languages and cultures covering cross-cultural similarities and differences. With the help of various examples, the authors explain socio-pragmatic mismatches that occur often in speech acts of apology, request, refusal, suggestion, and gratitude. Besides, the notions of "self" and "face" in Western versus Asian cultures are discussed in the issue of universality of pragmatic norms. Lastly, possible pragmatic variation within the same language is illustrated.

Pragmatics can be applied differently in different situations. "Pragmatics in specific discourse domains" is the title of Chapter 7. This chapter re-visits many of the issues discussed in the previous chapters. Pragmatics involved in five specific domains such as casual conversation, healthcare communication, the classroom, service encounters, and soap operas is presented. This chapter also discusses comparability in using corpora. The authors present

several examples of how a corpus could be used for comparison. Consistent with other chapters, examples from corpora help readers to understand key pragmatic issues in many different situations.

The final chapter is on pragmatics and language teaching. The authors focus on the implications of English globalization and pedagogic suggestions for teachers. In this chapter, the authors give another definition of pragmatics. That is, “the study of the way speakers and writers have to get things done while at the same time attending to the relationships they have with others” (p. 137). Pragmatic transfer between L1 and L2 could make L2 speakers appear insincere and rude. This is consistent with what Thomas (1983) suggested regarding pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic issues. In addition, answers to the questions on “what can be taught?” are provided. There are suggestions for teaching positive politeness, negative politeness, hedging, vague language, and the use of pragmatic markers. Pragmatic markers are divided into three parts: discourse markers, interactional markers, and response tokens.

The fact that a lot of real data from corpora are used in this book is one of its advantages. Examples used in this book are drawn from various corpora: the British National Corpus, the Corpus of Contemporary American English, the Limerick Corpus of Irish English, the Limerick and Belfast Corpus of Academic Spoken English, the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English, the Corpus of Meetings of English Language Teachers, and the Nottingham Health Communication Corpus.

Some readers might feel inconvenienced by the lack of a separate chapter for “implicature” which is one of the key concepts of pragmatics. Though one might say that some chapters need more explanations, *Introducing pragmatics in use* covers various key concepts of pragmatics. Importantly, written and spoken examples from various corpora are effectively used so that students and researchers do not have to rely on intuition-based instances. In particular, the use of spoken corpora such as the MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English) is one of the greatest merits of this book since authentic spoken examples are necessary for pragmatics textbooks. Even though some chapters do not have in-depth explanations on given topics, this book is brief but still informative as an introductory textbook. In addition, this book does not forget to talk about pragmatics across different cultures and languages. This book is very practical and useful as in each chapter the authors give suggestions for further reading. The greatest value of this book lies in the authors’ efforts putting theory into practice. Overall, *Introducing pragmatics in use* is an invaluable book for students and researchers in the field of pragmatics and corpus linguistics.

References

Austin, John. 1962. *How to do things with words*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Fasold, Ralph. 1990. *The sociolinguistics of language*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Searle, John. 1975. Indirect speech acts. In Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics*, vol. 3: *Speech Acts*. New York: Academic Press, 59–82.

Thomas, Jenny. 1983. Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics* 4: 91–112.

Yilmin KOO

Semantics, Pragmatics, Discourse Markers, Korean Linguistics

Research Interests: Yilmin Koo: Review on *Introducing Pragmatics in Use*. 2011. In

PRAGMATICS.REVIEWS 2013.1.3

Overview across various fields of speech acts and politeness

Leyre Ruiz de Zarobe, Yolanda Ruiz de Zarobe (eds.). 2012. *Speech Acts and Politeness across Languages and Cultures*. Bern: Peter Lang.

OVERVIEW

This edited volume is a rich and innovative collection of thirteen articles on verbal politeness written by authors from different parts of the world. In their introduction, the editors describe the scope of the volume and emphasize the challenges posed by widespread intercultural interactions which reveal communicative similarities and differences between languages and cultures. Thus they propose to study the realization of speech acts in some languages and cultures, compare different speech acts across languages, explore important aspects related to language teaching and learning, and evaluate methodological resources in pragmatics research. These areas are successfully addressed in the four sections of the book.

SYNOPSIS

The first section, *Speech Acts and Politeness in Some Languages and Cultures*, includes five articles concentrating on five different languages, four western and one eastern: Eva Ogiermann's study of Polish Politeness, Deniz Zeyreks' work on thanking in Turkish, Spryridoula Bella and Maria Sifianous's study on Greek students' email requests, Luis M. Larrigan and Itziar Idiazabal's use of generic 'you' in Basque, and Xiangying Jiang's work on Chinese politeness.

Section two, *Speech Acts and Politeness across Languages and Cultures*, contains three chapters comparing speech act realization in different languages: Kathrin Siebold compares thanking strategies in Spanish and German exploring culture specific styles of politeness, Leyre Ruiz de Zarobe investigates learning offers on the internet in Spanish and French, and Maria Shardakova analyzes the use of humor by Russian and American speakers.

Section three, *Speech Acts and Politeness in Second/Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, presents four articles: J. César Félix-Brasdefer and Maria Hasler-Barker's work on the teaching of complimenting and responding to a compliment in the Spanish FL classroom, Seonaid Beckwith and Jean-Marc Dewaele's study of the development of apologies in Japanese after a study abroad experience, Otilia Martí Arnándiz's work comparing the use of

request modifiers by male and female Spanish EFL students, and Vesna Milkolič's work on teaching Slovenian and Italian communicative styles.

Section four, Methodological Resources in Pragmatics, includes one single article by Eva Ogiermann and Denise Saßenroth on the use of statistics in contrastive pragmatics.

EVALUATION

Overall, this book is a valuable resource for scholars and students interested in the pragmatics of commonly and less commonly researched languages, cross-cultural communication and applied linguistics. All the articles present rich and extensive literature and innovative research/teaching methodologies, and offer interesting and groundbreaking contributions to pragmatics.

Carmen GARCIA

Research Interests: Spanish Pragmatics, Intercultural Communication, Teaching Pragmatics,
Teaching Spanish

Carmen M Garcia: Review on *Speech Acts and Politeness across Languages and Cultures*.
2012. In PRAGMATICS.REVIEWS 2013.1.3

Interdisciplinary approaches to the investigation of norms and normality

Katharina Rosenberg, Rita Vallentin (eds.). 2012. *Norm und Normalität. Beiträge aus Linguistik, Soziologie, Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaften*. Berlin: Logos Verlag.

The reviewed publication was created after a colloquium about norms and normality held at the university of Frankfurt/Oder, Germany. The purpose was to interdisciplinarily gather views on norms and to explain different methodological approaches on research about norms and normality.

The preface concentrates on linguistic norms referring to Coseriu's, Labov's and Saussure's ideas, then presents interdisciplinary notions and elements.

Norm und Normalität is opened by Klaus Gloy who considers the elementary parts, the normative parts of norms, in the tense atmosphere of sociology and philosophy. He discusses in which way norms can be defined by one's own will and how they depend on the expectations of others.

The publication is then divided into three parts:

The first chapter combines contributions on the origins and the creation of norms as well as their modifications and changes.

Rita Vallentin works on the basis of the concept of Gloy distinguishing between "we" and "the others". Focussing on her empirical research in a Guatemalan community, she points out that "we" behave corresponding to norms while "the others" don't respect them. She concludes: "Eine Einteilung von Gruppen in communities of practice macht aus den Bewertungen des eigenen 'richtigen' und des abweichenden Verhaltens der anderen, welche die Akteure selbst vornehmen, Normen erkennbar" (p. 38). This includes also norms which exist only implicitly. Although the results are quite convincing, the corpus-transcriptions contain some spelling mistakes.

Anna Zaytseva examines in her article the emergence of work norms in an international hotel chain. She points out five stadiums in the implementation process of work norms using the example of responsibility for mini-bars. The implementation of norms is, according to the author, "an active process of learning and interpreting as well as demonstrating power" (p. 57). Zaytseva investigates how norms function, how work norms are implemented, how they are seen immediately after their implementation and when they are widely accepted by staff.

Boike Rehbein presents a sociological, anthropological and linguistic analysis based on Saussure, Bourdieu and Wittgenstein which he applies to the development and the actual constitution of the Lao language. He combines elements of the different theories to show „inwiefern jede Sprache zugleich gesetzmäßig, ein Spiel und ein Kampf ist“ (p. 61). He points out that nationalism and globalization are the most significant forces transforming the Lao language.

Codified norms and the linguistic realities, which means norms in different regional varieties (Portuguese, Spanish and German), are the focus of attention of the second chapter.

Ulrike Mühlischlegel's article focuses on three different concepts of lusofonia: Lusofonia can be seen as a space of memories (“Erinnerungsraum”) based on the shared past of today's Portuguese speaking countries, it can be understood as a community of states for an economic and political cooperation, and it is an area of shared language and culture. She concentrates her analysis on the prestigious norm of the Portuguese language and its varieties. The author shows that the lusofonia cannot be compared to the Spanish speaking countries in many ways: History seems similar, but Mühlischlegel shows differences concerning the normative institutions referring to the language: Their importance on norm building is divergent.

Sönke Matthiessen has also looked at norms of a pluricentric language: He investigates the differences in relation to the position of the attributive adjective in nominal phrases in translations from English original versions to American and peninsular Spanish. His corpus consists of 24 episodes of Dr. House and the Shrek movie. He focuses on the syntactical structures of the español neutro which is used for the synchronization of movies and TV productions. His investigation shows the beginning of the creation of a panhispanic norm.

Claudia Scharioth discusses the discrepancy between language use and normative judgement of language-features by the speakers. She focuses on the perception of dialectal variety, precisely at the spirantization of the German [g] in e.g. intervocalic and ending positions proposing that there is a difference between informal and formal use. Some of the interview partners show a low willingness to speak the high variety instead of the dialect or even do not perceive the difference. The author deduces from this result: “Verschiedene Normhorizonte steuern individuelles Verhalten, das je nach Situation ausgehandelt wird” (p. 119).

The third part of the book contains papers on the subject of breaches and control of norms. They discuss the treatment of norms in literary and (sub-)cultural contexts.

Nils Bahlo and Jörg Bücken consider forms how breaches of norms and their sanctions are communicatively handled using the example of conditional formats. They make a distinction between situational and general norms and show some activities of norm-controlling in interactions in teenage-slang on the basis of some conditional formats in everyday life. The result of their corpus-analysis shows that there exist two types of conditional formats depending on a real or a fictional sanction.

Melanie Grundmann treats the subject of deviation from the norm and the breaking of a taboo using the concept of the dandy as an outsider in the novel "Armance" by Stendhal. In the field between individuality vs. norm, the taboo is treated as a special case of norm. Stendhal uses the physical deficiency of his main character as a deviation from the moral norm therefore seen as pathological. Grundmann describes the dandyism which is characterized by accepting and ignoring norms at the same time. Unfortunately, her paper does not contain a conclusion.

Ramona Jakobs analyses the norms of speech in Italian renaissance-dialogue on the basis of Searle's speech act theory. Using the distinction, according to Blumenthal, between effecting and affecting speech act she proves the assumption that the Libro del Cortegiano is directed at enjoyment and not knowledge. Based on this result, the author proposes to find a more precise and detailed distinction instead of the common dichotomy of successful and failed speech act.

Milan Mihajlovic discusses normativity in the field of argumentative discourse. His paper considers the sixth of ten pragma-dialectical rules "which is theorizing the necessity of a common ground in order to make a meaningful argumentation possible at all" (p. 173). After a detailed analysis, the author argues that the sixth rule must be completed with the following proposition: "Gemeinsame Grundannahmen sind nicht zu etablieren, sondern mitsamt der notwendigen Konsequenzen, sprich der (Un-)Möglichkeit eines Lösungsversuchs per Diskussion, lediglich ob ihrer Vorhandenheit oder Ermangelung festzustellen. Vorschläge können nur gebilligt oder abgelehnt, nicht aber diskutiert bzw. argumentativ eingeholt werden" (p. 179).

In general, this book highlights many different scientific (linguistic, sociological, literary and cultural) approaches to the investigation of norms and normality and opens an interdisciplinary field of corresponding research. *Norm und Normalität* is an important contribution because the subject is treated in a very complex manner. Nevertheless, it would have been helpful to point out more precisely the relations between the different disciplines in

a more concrete introductory paper. A more uniform appearance of each paper with regard to writing formalities would have made for easier reading.

This Review was written in cooperation with **Katharina Leonhardt**.

Julia MONTEMAYOR GRACIA

Research Interests: sociolinguistics, Spanish in America, indigene languages, language and identity, language and politics, multilingualism

Julia Montemayor Gracia: Review on *Norm und Normalität. Beiträge aus Linguistik, Soziologie, Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaften*. 2012. In PRAGMATICS.REVIEWS 2013.1.3

The first dictionary dedicated to semantics

M. Lynne Murphy, Anu Koskela. 2010. *Key Terms in Semantics*. London/New York: Continuum.

Lynne Murphy and Anu Koskela (both from the University of Sussex) have produced what could possibly be considered as the first dictionary dedicated to semantics, at least in the English language.¹ This awaited reference book is organized like an A-Z dictionary of core concepts related to semantics (pp. 7-176), which composes the bulk of this volume, completed by a presentation of nineteen important figures (“Key thinkers”) in semantics such as Noam Chomsky, Willard Van Orman Quine, Bertrand Russell, Ferdinand de Saussure and other, lesser-known academics in this field like Rudolf Carnap, Saul Kripke or Anne Wierzbicka (pp. 177-219). While there is no “dictionary of semantics” as such existing in the English language at this moment, this unique and innovative book will be most helpful for advanced undergraduates (and for most scholars) in the disciplines of semantics, linguistics, and their related fields.

Even though there is no definition of semantics in the A-Z section and no entry for this term, Lynne Murphy and Anu Koskela explain in their detailed Introduction their focus on linguistic semantics, understood here as a branch within linguistics that “approaches the meaning of linguistic expressions with reference to the structures of language that either reveal (or possibly) constrain the range of possible linguistic meanings and the architecture through which meaning is constructed or represented” (p. 2). However, the authors also acknowledge the fact there are other disciplinary approaches related to the understanding of signs, such as “pragmatics, semiotics, and grammatical theory” (p. 3).

These Key terms in semantics have much to offer in an impressive diversity of entries organized alphabetically, from “Absolute” and “Abstract” (p. 7) up to “Word” and “Zeugma”, the latter being equivalent to “syllepsis” and defined as “a linguistic construction where a single constituent is related to two different semantic interpretations” (p. 176). Usually, each entry covers about half a page, with some notable exceptions for more important or more

¹ Twenty years ago, there was in China a Concise Dictionary of semantics (by Ben She Yi Ming, Shandong People's Publishing House, 1993).

complex key terms. Of course, the basic terms (like adjective, noun, number, and verb) are included as well.

Considering the privileged topics common to most readers of these pages, one should begin by looking firstly at the page dedicated to “pragmatics”, which are “defined as the study of language use, how language interacts with context”, adding that “the domain of pragmatics is generally viewed as excluding those aspects of meaning that fall into the realm of semantics” (p. 124). This one-page entry ranks among the most interesting, accurate, and detailed in this book; it includes a distinction in five points between semantics and pragmatics, a brief presentation of “central issues for pragmatics”, and some ongoing topics, completed by a few bibliographical references.

Among various entries (probably more than 200), there is an unusual one on “Definition”, which “in semantics and lexicography is typically expected to include only as much information as is necessary to explain of the word or phrase and exclude irrelevant information” (p. 53). Elsewhere, one finds as well an entry on “concept”, presented as “mental representations of knowledge about categories of entities and experiences”, adding that “the concept allows us to identify and categorize things in the world (...)” (p. 37). Further on, the term “context” is seen as “the background against which the meaning of an utterance is interpreted” (p. 46). A longer discussion and an appropriate articulation of the concept follow. Among too many interesting topics, one finds elsewhere a definition of “Holism”, which is opposed to atomism and presented as the “position that meanings are not composed of semantic components — that is, that any subparts that may be discerned in a meaning cannot exist without reference to the whole meaning or to the arrangements of meanings in a semantic network” (p. 78).

Such dictionaries and most “key terms books” produced by major publishers (SAGE, Routledge) are undoubtedly valuable because they provide detailed definitions and multiple articulations of core concepts that need to be discussed and not just defined in a few words in order to get a full spectrum of their significations and implications.

Perhaps one would have liked to find more entries, for example one specific entry on “ideologies”, “interaction” or “symbols” (unfortunately, these three “missing” terms do not even appear in the index). Such encyclopedic works are often like an invitation to jump randomly from one concept to another. Likewise, a specific entry on “theory” would have been useful; we only find here an entry on “theory theory”, according to which “concepts are defined against a conceptual base of non-expert, folk theories” (p. 164). Other theoretical

considerations reappear here and there (see for example the entry on “Conceptual Metaphor Theory”, p. 38, or the entry on “Discourse Representation Theory”, p. 58).

Since academics and book critics are always asking for more whenever they review a comprehensive dictionary or any reference book such as this one, I do have a few (minor) quibbles about this book. Obviously, a single entry on semantics (plus some other variants such as linguistic semantics) should have been included in the A-Z section; it is briefly discussed here in the prefatorily pages. At the end of the book, instead of providing just a listing, the bibliography of “Key texts in Semantics” should have included a few comments explaining why each book is relevant in this field (pp. 221-233). Nevertheless, these impressive Key terms in semantics are instructive and written by passionate experts; obviously, Lynne Murphy and Anu Koskela should be congratulated for their initiative. Like an invitation to this discipline, these Key terms in semantics will be very useful for students in linguistics, pragmatics, and philosophy, and although it might be too dense for the college level, this book should be part of every university library. Maybe potential buyers should check a few pages before buying, just to see whether they feel comfortable with the level of deepening, complexity, and clarity brought into this book. Perhaps some younger readers would prefer a simpler text or a more general reference tool either in philosophy or linguistics, although there are not many reference books available now (at least in English) on this particular field.

Yves LABERGE

Research Interests: American Studies, Canadian Studies, Quebec Studies, Cultural Studies,
Gender Studies, Environmental Studies, Social Theories

Yves Laberge: Review on *Key Terms in Semantics*. 2010. In PRAGMATICS.REVIEWS
2013.1.3