

# PRAGMATIC AND IT'S USE IN SOCIAL CONTEXT

Ismawardi Santoso, Rini Kustini

Program Study Manajemen Informatika Komputer, STMIK Triguna Dharma

Jl .A.H Nasution No 73 F- Medan

E- mail : ismawardisantoso@gmail.com

## Abstract

In language studies, pragmatics is a very wide field. It examines our use and our understanding of the language we speak and hear, read and write. Pragmatics examines the importance in language studies of our general knowledge, and the importance of common-sense knowledge of our world. When we *use* language, we unconsciously assume that we are talking to somebody who has grown up in the same sort of world as us. Somebody who thinks like us. This can lead to confusion in conversation, especially between people from different countries or social backgrounds. We have to learn the pragmatic rules of language, we are not born with them.

**Key words:** pragmatic, interpretation, social context

## What is Pragmatics?

Generally pragmatics is about the *shared knowledge* that we all must use as a tool to understand words. Most English readers do not read Latin, Greek etc. They will not understand a single word of what is written if they have no knowledge of the language. If an author wants to show a foreign text, he or she, out of courtesy to the intended reader must give a translation. Pragmatics, in the language sciences, is the study of how *real-world* and *shared* knowledge impacts on the way we *think* we understand each other.

Pragmatics is the study of meaning of words, phrases and full sentences, but unlike semantics which deals with the objective meanings of words that can be found in dictionaries, pragmatics is more concerned with the meanings that words in fact convey when they are used, or with intended speaker meaning as it is sometimes referred to. It can be said that pragmatics attempts to analyze how it happens that often more is communicated than said. As

frequently the meaning of discourse is context-dependant, pragmatics examines the devices used by language users (ex. deictic expressions, or anaphora) in order to express the desired meaning and how it is perceived.

The interpretation of what meanings the speaker wanted to convey using particular words is often influenced by factors such as the listeners' assumptions or the context. In pragmatics two types of context can be differentiated: linguistic context and physical context. **Linguistic context**, sometimes called co-text is the set of words that surround the lexical item in question in the same phrase, or sentence. The **physical context** is the location of a given word, the situation in which it is used, as well as timing, all of which aid proper understating of the words.

## AREAS OF PRAGMATICS

### Deixis

In linguistics, **deixis** refers to the phenomenon where in understanding the meaning of certain words and phrases in an utterance requires contextual information. Words which have a fixed semantic meaning, but have a denotational meaning that constantly changes depending on time and/or place, are deictic. A word or phrase whose meaning requires this contextual information — for example, English pronouns — is said to be deictic. So deixis is the study of how the language encode or grammaticalize features of the context of utterance or speech event.

Possibly the most common categories of contextual information referred to by deixis are those of person, place, and time. Here are the major grammaticalized types:

#### a. *Personal Deixis.*

Personal deixis concerns itself with the grammatical persons involved in an utterance, both those directly involved (e.g. the speaker, the addressee), not directly involved (e.g. overhearers — those who hear the utterance but who are not directly addressed) and those mentioned in the utterance. In English, this is generally accomplished with pronouns (I, we, you, they, he, she, it). The personal deictic 'I', assigns roles, like speaker or hearer, as well as 'you' and 'we' do. The person speaking about her/him by using 'I' assigns her/him to the roll of the speaker, but sometimes referring to her/him at the same time too. Besides, the personal deixis of 'you' has a special use, that is it's singular and plural forms are the same. This ambiguity can cause misunderstandings and mistakes sometimes. The following examples demonstrate this;

**"You can go now"**

- a. **"You"** in one occasion may refer to a singular person when the speaker is talking to one person and he means that the listener to leave.
- b. **"You"** in another occasion may refer to plural persons when the speaker is talking to the crowd and he may mean that the listeners to leave him alone.

#### b. *Spatial Deixis*

Spatial deixis concerns itself with the spatial locations relevant to an utterance or speech events. Similarly to personal deixis, the locations can be those of the speaker and addressee, or those of persons or objects being referred to. It interprets something to hearer, sets the object in immediate spatial relation to the speaker. The spatial deixis includes the adverbs "here" and "there" and the demonstratives "this" and "that", or "these" and "those", or "the". The words "here, this, these" commonly indicate 'near the speaker', and 'there, that, those' indicate 'far from the speaker'. However, they are all depends on the context. 'This' and 'that' give information about the proximity or the distance of the speaker or hearer.

#### **"This book is very interesting"**

- a. **" This "** can mean that the book the speaker means is the book which is near the speaker or in his/her hand. And he/she had already read it.
- b. **" This "** can also mean that the book the speaker means is somewhere, far from him/her, because the book he/she means is the one in an catalogue.

#### c. *Temporal Deixis.*

Temporal deixis is also called time deixis. Time deixis concerns itself with the various times involved in and referred to in an utterance spoken. It describes the most abstract

dimension of the so-called 'coordinate system of subjective orientation'.

- The time at which an utterance was spoken or a message written is called coding time.
- The time at which an utterance is heard or read (in a letter) is called receiving time.

Temporal deixis relates to the usage of adverb of time, like *now, at this moment, then, soon, lately, recently, ago, today, tomorrow* and also 'tenses'. Their interpretation depends upon knowing the relevant utterance time.

1. Temporal Deixis

**"We like to have party at this moment."**

- a. **"at this moment"** may refer to the moment right exactly when the speaker is speaking to the listener
- b. **"at this moment"** It can also mean that the speaker wants to tell to the listener that the moment he means is a special moment such wedding anniversary, birthday etc.

d. **Textual Deixis.**

Textual deixis is also called discourse deixis which refers to the use of expressions within an utterance to refer to parts of the discourse that contains the utterance — including the utterance itself. Textual deixis deal with the orientation in the text through the writer/speaker, the relation of the text passages to the current utterance either as ahead of time or past, forthcoming or simultaneous. It encodes reference to portions of the unfolding discourse in which the utterance is located. The speaking form can be used in the written form.

**"You can study the material as explained above"**

- a. **'above'** in written form means the material is written in a paragraph above that we can see the position clearly.

- b. **'above'** in spoken form may be one, two or three paragraphs above.

e. **Social Deixis**

Social deixis relates to the social information that is encoded within various expressions, such as relative social status and familiarity that are uttered via language in communication. It does not relate to the three main components (person, time and place). So social deixis tell about the level of relationship between people rather than to information.

**"There comes my princess"**

- a. **"my princess"** can mean that the speaker wants to tell the listener about her daughter. Princess here means daughter.
- b. **"my princess"** If the context of the utterance is said by a boss, the princess meant is one of his lady staffs whose ideas make the company develop.

**Implicature**

Unlike many other topics in pragmatics, implicature does not have an extended history. The key ideas were proposed by Grice in the William James lectures delivered at Harvard in 1967 and still only partially published (Grice, 1975, 1978). The proposals were relatively brief and only suggestive of how future work might proceed.

**Implicature** is a technical term in the pragmatics subfield of linguistics, coined by Paul Grice, which refers to what is *suggested* in an utterance, even though not expressed nor *strictly implied* (that is, entailed) by the utterance. For example, the sentence "*Mary had a baby and got married*" strongly suggests that Mary had the baby before the wedding, but the sentence would still be *strictly true* if Mary had her baby after she got married. Further, if we add the qualification "*— not necessarily in that order*" to the original sentence, then the implicature is *cancelled* even

though the meaning of the original sentence is not altered.

Types of Implicature:

#### a. Conversational implicature

Paul Grice identified three types of general conversational implicature:

1. The speaker deliberately flouts a conversational maxim to convey an additional meaning not expressed literally.

**Annie : Did you see my children?**

**Yunita : Oh, there is topeng monyet in the next block.**

Context: The conversation happens on the way Annie is looking for her children. Here Yunita tries to tell Annie that many children are watching topeng monyet in the next block, and she may find her children there.

2. The speaker's desire to fulfill two conflicting maxims results in his or her flouting one maxim to invoke the other. For instance, a speaker responds to the question

**"Where is John?"** with the following utterance:

***He's either in the cafeteria or in his office.***

In this case, the Maxim of Quantity and the Maxim of Quality are in conflict. A cooperative speaker does not want to be ambiguous but also does not want to give false information by giving a specific answer in spite of his uncertainty. By flouting the Maxim of Quantity, the speaker invokes the Maxim of Quality, leading to the implicature that the speaker does not have the evidence to give a certain answer to where John is.

3. The speaker invokes a maxim as a basis for interpreting the utterance. In the following exchange:

**"Do you know where I can get some gas"?**

***"There's a gas station around the corner".***

The second speaker invokes the Maxim of Relevance, resulting in the implicature that "the gas station is open and one can probably get gas there"

#### b. Scalar Implicature

According to Grice (1975), another form of conversational implicature is also known as a scalar implicature also known as **quantity implicature**. This concerns the conventional uses of words like "all" or "some" in conversation. If some one says

**'I have some of my money in cash',**

this suggests to a hearer (though it does not logically imply it) that the speaker does not have all his money in cash.

#### c. Conventional implicature

Conventional implicature is part of lexical item's or expression's agreed meaning rather than derived from principles of language use and not part of the conditions for the truth of the item or expression.

**"Lena is poor but happy."**

This sentence implies that poverty and happiness are not compatible but in spite of this Lena is still happy.

#### 2.2.3 Presupposition

A presupposition is background belief, relating to an utterance, that

- must be mutually known or assumed by the speaker and addressee for the utterance to be considered appropriate in context
- generally will remain a necessary assumption whether the utterance is placed in the form of an assertion, denial, or question, and
- can generally be associated with a specific lexical item or grammatical feature (presupposition trigger) in the utterance.

Presuppositions - the meaning of the word 'presuppose' is to *'assume beforehand; involve, imply'* - represent some of the most powerful of language patterns. They are in common, everyday use by all of us and are built into the structure of the English language; indeed it is probably impossible to utter a sentence of any consequence without making some kind of assumption - and hence without the use of presupposition. Presupposition is the mechanism used implicitly to make assumption in day to day language whereas direct assertion is the means used to do so overtly (although all but the simplest assertions will themselves contain presuppositions). The difference between the two is that the latter is a type of communication that is accessible to direct, conscious processing whilst the former - the assumptions in which must normally be accepted for a given sentence or phrase to have meaning or sense - normally represents subconscious processing. The contents of any given presuppositional sentence will normally have to be assumed to be true 'a priori' in order for the sentence to be even understood as meaningful 'language'.

### Speech Act

**Speech act** is a technical term in linguistics and the philosophy of language. The contemporary use of the term goes back to John L. Austin's doctrine of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Many scholars identify

'speech acts' with illocutionary acts, rather than locutionary or perlocutionary acts. Like with the notion of illocutionary acts, there are different opinions concerning the question what being a speech act amounts to. The extension of speech acts is commonly taken to include such acts as promising, ordering, greeting, warning, inviting someone and congratulating.

Speech acts can be analysed on three levels: A locutionary act, the performance of an utterance: the actual utterance and its ostensible meaning, comprising phonetic, phatic and rhetic acts corresponding to the verbal, syntactic and semantic aspects of any meaningful utterance; an illocutionary act: the semantic 'illocutionary force' of the utterance, thus its real, intended meaning (see below); and in certain cases a further perlocutionary act: its actual effect, such as persuading, convincing, scaring, enlightening, inspiring, or otherwise getting someone to do or realize something, whether intended or not (Austin 1962)

### Classifying illocutionary speech acts

Searle (1975)<sup>[1]</sup> has set up the following classification of illocutionary speech acts:

- **assertives** = speech acts that commit a speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition, e.g. reciting a creed
- **directives** = speech acts that are to cause the hearer to take a particular action, e.g. requests, commands and advice
- **commissives** = speech acts that commit a speaker to some future action, e.g. promises and oaths
- **expressives** = speech acts that express the speaker's attitudes and emotions towards the proposition, e.g. congratulations, excuses and thanks
- **declarations** = speech acts that change the reality in accord with the proposition of the declaration, e.g. baptisms, pronouncing

someone guilty or pronouncing someone husband and wife

Speech act theory broadly explains these utterances as having three parts or aspects: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts,

- a. *Locutionary* acts are simply the speech acts that have taken place. Meaning is contained in utterance.
- b. *Illocutionary* acts are the real actions which are performed by the utterance, where saying equals doing, as in betting, plighting one's troth, welcoming and warning. Meaning is intended by the speakers.

In this kind of speech acts, the real action performed by the utterance. The actions are taken from the use of two kinds of the process (Mental and Verbal), such as: say, describe, remark, comment, command, order, request, apologies, criticize, welcome, promise, etc), also the expression of approval (agree, disagree, deal, accept, support, contribute) and the expression of regret (realize, acknowledge, confess, perceive)

- c. *Perlocutionary* acts are the effects of the utterance on the listener, who accepts the bet or pledge of marriage, is welcomed or warned. Meaning is derived or interpreted by the hearer, on the other hand, the meaning is what's there n the hearer's mind.

## THE APPLICATIONS OF PRAGMATICS IN DAILY COMMUNICATION

### Deixis

#### 1. Personal Deixis

"You have to go now"

- c. If the context of the utterance happens at the airport, and it is time of the listener's flight, it means that the speaker reminds the listener to hurry up to the plane.
- d. The context of the utterance can mean that the speaker doesn't want to see and talk to the listener anymore and the speaker wants to be alone.

#### 2. Spatial Deixis

"This book is very interesting"

- c. The utterance above can mean that the book the speaker means is the book which is near the speaker or in his/her hand. And he/she had already read it.
- d. It can also mean that the book the speaker means is somewhere, far from him/her, because the book he/she means is the one in an catalogue.

#### 3. Temporal Deixis

"We are having lunch together *at this moment.*"

- c. The context of the utterance can mean that the speaker wants to tell the listener that he/she and the others are in a restaurant at the moment and the listener can join them immediately.
- d. It can also mean that the speaker wants to remind the listener that he/she doesn't want to be disturbed at the moment, because he/she has a business with other people.

#### 4. Textual Deixis

"You can study the material as explained *above*"

- c. 'above' in written form means the material is written in a paragraph above that we can see the position clearly.
- d. 'above' in spoken form may be one, two or three paragraphs above.

#### 5. Social Deixis

"There comes my *princess*"

- c. In one context it can mean that the speaker wants to tell the listener about her daughter. Princess here means daughter.
- d. If the context of the utterance is said by a boss, the princess meant is one of his lady staffs whose ideas make the company develop.

Context: The dialogue happens in a painting gallery. Salsa wants to tell Sabrina that all of Leonardo Da Vinci's collections are very expensive.

**Implicature**

Annie : *Did you see my children?*  
 Yunita : *Oh, there is topeng monyet in the next block.*

Context: The conversation happens on the way Annie is looking for her children. Here Yunita tries to tell Annie that many children are watching topeng monyet in the next block, and she may find her children there.

Farhan : *What a nice game.*  
 Mother : *What time is it, Farhan?*

Context: The conversation occurs at home when Farhan is playing a game on computer. His mother tries to remind him that bed time has come, and he must stop playing game.

Sally : *What are you doing now, Heri?*  
 Heri : *I have a lot of cows.*

Context: The conversation takes place somewhere when Sally and Heri see accidentally. Heri's statement implicates a kind of job of farming. He wants to tell Sally that he is now a cow farmer, and he has many cows, may be fifty or hundreds.

Sabrina : *How much is the painting?*  
 Salsa : *It's Leonardo Da Vinci.*

**Presupposition**

- 1. Existential/existence presupposition  
*"Juli's eldest son has a sixth sense".*  
 ➤ (The speaker presupposes that the hearer has known Juli has more than one child and the eldest is a son)

*"Our children will have examination next week, won't they?"*

- (In this context, the speaker's and the hearer's child study in the same class at the same school, and on one occasion the speaker wants to make sure the speaker about the examination)

- (In another context, the speaker and the hearer are teachers at the same school, and the speaker presupposes the hearer has known that the children meant are their students)

- 2. a. Factive presupposition  
*"It is strange that she cannot eat rice"*  
 ➤ (It is true that she cannot eat rice at all, and in this context the speaker reports the speaker about the information, and the hearer has known who she is)

- b. Non-factive presupposition  
*"He has pretended to have a stomachache in order not to do the housework".*  
 ➤ (He doesn't have a stomachache actually, but he pretended to. In this way, he will not be asked to do the housework)

- c. Counterfactive presupposition

*"If I had much time this week, I could finish all my work"*

- (In fact, the speaker doesn't have much time this week or he is very busy, so he cannot finish all his work)

Lexical presupposition

*"My husband has stopped smoking since four years ago".*

- (It means the speaker's husband used to smoke four years ago, then start from that time he stop smoking, and it has been four years until now)

Structural presupposition

*"Who came into my room last night?"*

- (From the context, it is known that someone came into the speaker's room last night, but she hasn't known who until the time she asks the hearer)

Prelocutionary : The hearer take the speaker a glass of water. (Prelocutionary succeeds)

4. Locutionary : *"What beautiful flowers. I like this kind of flower"*

Illocutionary : The speaker hopes the hearer will give her a few.

Prelocutionary : The hearer then offer the speaker to take a few. (Prelocutionary is successful)

5. Locutionary : *"It seems that the box is too heavy to lift".*

Illocutionary : The speaker wants the hearer to help her.

Prelocutionary : The hearer keep reading a novel. (Prelocutionary does not succeed)

## SPEECH ACT

1. Locutionary : *"What time is it now?"*  
Illocutionary : The speaker wants the children to stop playing and to take a bath.  
Prelocutionary : The children then stop playing and go to the bathroom. (Prelocutionary is successful)
2. Locutionary : *"I am very hungry"*  
Illocutionary : The speaker wants to make some food by herself.  
Prelocutionary : The hearer then go to buy some food. (Prelocutionary is not successful)
3. Locutionary : *"Is it a dry season here?"*  
Illocutionary : The speaker is thirsty and wants the hearer to offer him some drink.

## CONCLUSION

There are contributions that pragmatics can make to problems of communication between humans who speak (more or less) the same language. For example, there can be significant inter-ethnic misunderstandings due to different pragmatic analysis of utterances whose literal content is perfectly well understood; leading questions, probes, hints, etc., may well not be interpreted correctly.

The application of pragmatics to problems in second language learning is based on the assumption that, despite the probable universality of processed like implicature, there are likely to be significant differences not only in the structure of languages but in their use. There thus arises the possibility of a systematic contrastive pragmatics, that would isolate potential areas of misunderstanding arising from the learner's assumption that a construction in the language being learnt will have the same implicatures, presuppositions, illocutionary force and

conversational uses as some analogous construction in the native language.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Green, G. (1975). *How to get people to do things with words: the whimpeative question*. In Cole & Morgan (1975)

Grice, H.P. (1961). The causal theory of perception. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Vol. 35.

Levinson, Steven C. (1983). Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics. *Pragmatics*.

Niecgoda, K., Rover, C. 'Pragmatic and grammatical awareness.' In: *Pragmatics in Language Teaching*. Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 2001, 63-79, Gose, K. R., Kasper, G. (eds) *Pragmatics* ISBN: 0-521-00858-1..