

Cornelia Ilie and Neal R. Norrick (Eds.), *Pragmatics and its Interfaces*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2018.

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As an area of linguistic inquiry, pragmatics continues to inspire intense interest thanks to its dynamic multiplicity of theoretical and analytical perspectives. This timely volume not only extends this trend, but also offers a fresh perspective that highlights cross-disciplinary investigation, in particular, how pragmatics intersects with other fields of study and the mutual contributions that arise therefrom. Towards this aim, Cornelia Ilie and Neal R. Norrick have brought together an outstanding group of internationally recognized scholars whose expertise covers a range of disciplines including sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, rhetoric, narrative studies, translation, anthropology, gesture studies, (im)politeness theory, corpus linguistics, internet-mediated communication, and humor studies. The volume is the culmination of a scholarly conversation that came into focus during a panel at the 2015 International Pragmatics Association (IPrA) Conference in Antwerp, Belgium (which I was privileged to attend), in which most of the contributors participated. In their Introduction, the editors pose some intriguing questions relating to differences between pragmatics and the above-mentioned fields and their diverse methodological/analytical approaches (e.g., quantitative vs. qualitative, bottom-up vs. top-down, micro vs. macro), thus previewing the thought-provoking content of the book's twelve chapters that are largely ordered according to their delivery at the 2015 IPrA conference.

In the first chapter, Janet Holmes shows how a sociopragmatic approach can shed new light on how individuals navigate and demonstrate awareness of social constraints by conforming to or flouting them in face-to-face interactions within communities of practice. She draws from both sociolinguistics

and pragmatics in a series of analyses that illustrates how macro-level societal norms are realized during micro-level workplace interactions, where interlocutors adeptly employ strategies involving directness/indirectness and joking/teasing that reflect their awareness of how norms come into play when negotiating their identities in particular social contexts.

In Chapter 2, Anita Fetzer explains how context constitutes a point of confluence between pragmatics and discourse analysis by characterising discourse as a communicative action that entails a sequential organization of concatenated and interconnected ordinary speech acts (e.g., requests, directives) and higher-level speech acts that have discourse-structuring and metadiscursive functions, thus bridging the gap between discourse as a whole on a macro level and its constitutive parts on a micro level. Using excerpts from British parliamentary discourse, she shows that speech acts are elements of local exchanges, but are also embedded in the broader shared institutional context in which participants engage and express their communicative intentions.

Chapter 3, authored by Paul Drew, provides evidence of how the pragmatic notion of context emerges sequentially during conversations when speakers orient their utterances on the basis of implicatures and judgements as the interaction unfolds, thus demonstrating their understanding of implied meanings by using linguistic strategies involving indirectness and perceptions of appropriateness. This complementary relationship between pragmatics and conversation analysis transpires in a series of conversational exchanges in both everyday social interactions and institutional settings, during which speakers adapt their responses to what their interlocutors are “‘doing’ in their prior turn” (p. 81) according to the evolving circumstances.

In Chapter 4, Cornelia Ilie illustrates a pragma-rhetorical investigation of political discourse that merges pragmatic features such as pronominal deictic markers, speech acts, and metadiscursive parentheticals with persuasive argumentative strategies based on rhetorical genres (deliberative, forensic, and epideictic) and rhetorical appeals (logos, ethos, and pathos), thus integrating bottom-up

and top-down perspectives. In particular, she offers an in-depth look at two speech events (i.e., U.S. election campaign interviews and British parliamentary question time sessions) to demonstrate how this integrative approach results in a multifaceted analysis that illuminates the complex interactional and interpersonal dynamics among the participants.

Neal R. Norrick applies pragmatic constructs in Chapter 5 to analyse authentic conversational narratives from two different perspectives. With a bottom-up approach, he shows how pragmatic devices such as discourse markers, formulaic language, disfluencies and tense shifts are exploited during storytelling to steer listeners through a narrative performance while conveying the storyteller's stance towards the reported event. With a top-down, or "outside-in approach" in the author's words (p. 124), it is possible to understand how a story as a whole can fill a contextualized slot and perform a direct or indirect illocutionary act, for example, as direct representative act when a speaker recounts a *life story* episode during conversation, or as a representative act that instead becomes a sort of indirect apology (an expressive act) when used by a speaker to explain (or make excuses for) a shortcoming.

In Chapter 6, Juliane House highlights the close connection between pragmatics and translation, observing that all translated texts are products of contextualization. She further explains different ways of recontextualising texts through overt translation which activates the original text's context vs. covert translation which focuses on the target context, adapting a cultural filter to accommodate the new recipients' cultural orientations. She concludes with a reflection on the increasingly dominant role of English as a lingua franca in the context of globalisation, which may lead to less reliance on cultural filtering as translated texts become more culturally universal and undergo a process of homogenisation.

Gerardine M. Peirera makes a convincing argument in Chapter 7 that gestures play a key role in pragmatic analysis, rather than acting as peripheral elements or "add-ons" (p. 164) within the dynamics of interaction. This position is illustrated through the analysis of video-recorded interactions between two interactants involved in a task to plan an outing at a zoo, using a physical map and an information

sheet that enables them to jointly identify the various sites to visit. Her analysis demonstrates how gestures and gaze perform pragmatic functions linked to cohesion and reference for establishing connections and to stance-taking for expressing understanding, agreement, or disagreement. She concludes by proposing “gesture pragmatics” (p. 165) as a fruitful area for further research.

In Chapter 8, Gunter Senft sets the scene with an overview of the field of anthropological linguistics, foregrounding its connection to pragmatics by referring to Malinowski’s (1923, p. 296) notion of *context of situation* as crucial for interpreting meaning. In an engaging account of personal experiences during field trips in the Trobriand Islands of Papua New Guinea, he illustrates the nexus between pragmatics and anthropology by means of three episodes involving inappropriate reactions to greetings, the suppression of emotions, and failure to observe taboos when asking questions. In each case, to fully understand the interactional dynamics, it is necessary to have knowledge of the “situational-intentional registers” (p. 189) used by the members of this ethnic community to realize their intentions and to bond socially.

Chapter 9, authored by Michael Haugh and Jonathan Culpeper, proposes an integrative approach to investigate the pragmatics of impoliteness that combines different analytical perspectives and methods. The approach is illustrated by means of a case study of a racial slur that is widely considered as highly offensive, namely, the n-word (to use its euphemised form) in two analytical contexts: a conversation between two contestants of Big Brother UK and the sub-section of British English in the Oxford English Corpus (OEC). In the first case, methods of interactional pragmatics are applied to offer a detailed analysis of how the n-word is interpreted by participants according to different understandings that unfold during conversation. In the second case, methods of corpus linguistics are implemented to retrieve occurrences of the n-word in the OEC, as well as its lexicogrammatical patterning and context-driven meanings, which also revealed non-offensive usage in particular interactional contexts.

In Chapter 10, Christoph Rühlemann and Brian Clancy introduce the “corpus pragmatic approach” (p. 263) to analyse texts in which qualitative methods associated with pragmatics are effectively combined with quantitative techniques of corpus linguistics, also characterised as the integration of horizontal and vertical reading of texts. This approach is particularly well suited to relatively small specialised corpora that enable a more in-depth analysis to take into account both co-text and context, thus sharing common ground with Corpus-assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) (Partington, Duguid, & Taylor, 2013; Baker, 2009). The authors illustrate corpus pragmatics with an exploratory case study of the *as-if* clause used with the indicative *was* vs. the subjunctive *were* in a sample of occurrences extracted from the spoken component of the Corpus of Contemporary American English. They provide evidence of how the choice between the two verb forms is related to pragmatic processes involving deixis and factuality.

Francisco Yus, in Chapter 11, discusses the challenges involved in analysing internet-mediated communication from a pragmatic perspective. Starting from the premise that pragmatic analyses of language in physical settings have traditionally highlighted processes of coding, inferring, and contextualisation of propositional content, he explains how virtual (i.e., internet-mediated) settings are impacted by system-related and user-related variables that trigger non-intended non-propositional effects, for example, feelings of social belonging (user-related/positive) or frustration with inability to effectively use the computer interface (system-related/negative). The author concludes by proposing a model that provides for multiple layers in the pragmatic analysis of internet communication at various levels: contextual constraints, discourse, interaction, audience, collectivity, and non-propositional effects.

In the final chapter, Nancy D. Bell reflects on the interface between pragmatics and humor studies by underscoring how the two areas of investigation have frequently contributed to one another. She first explains how key concerns of pragmatics such as politeness, irony, and sarcasm have been

applied to examine how humor emerges in social interaction. She then discusses how notions from the interdisciplinary field of humor scholarship, drawing from both psychology and sociology, have enhanced our understanding of how we use language in interactions, specifically pragmatic aspects involving contextualisation processes, construction of identity, and negotiation of social relations. The author thus makes a clear case for the central rather than marginal role of humor in the construction of meanings in situated interactions.

Across the twelve chapters comprising this book, the contributors have succeeded in providing a deeper understanding of the interrelations between pragmatics and other complementary fields, also by honing in contextualisation as the common thread. Indeed, context-related concepts emerge in the keywords of many chapters, and this broad convergence constitutes a strong point of the volume. Other strengths are reflected in the useful historical overviews of the disciplinary fields and revisitations of key concepts of pragmatics within the individual chapters, careful cross-referencing among chapters, and a comprehensive index, all to the benefit of novices and experienced linguists alike. To sum up, this volume provides a strong impetus for reassessing both the boundaries and synergies between pragmatics and other disciplines. In this way, it not only offers insights into the current state of the art, but also suggests promising directions for future cross-disciplinary linguistic research.

References

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Bionote

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