

Pragmatics and Language Teaching

Editors: Şeyda Selen ÇİMEN • Betül BAL GEZEGİN

2nd edition





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PRAGMATICS AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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PREFACE

We, as the editors of this book, have been engaged in the teaching of the English language as B.A. students, M.A. and Ph.D. students, and then as instructors at ELT departments at different universities. Having dealt with various English language teacher education curricula throughout these years - as students and then as instructors – we have always felt that something is missing without the course named “Pragmatics and Language Teaching.” Most of the ELT departments in Turkey had covered the topic of Pragmatics as a component of Linguistics course, and only a few ELT departments had a separate course as Pragmatics. However, Pragmatics and language teaching was not included in the English language teacher education curriculum provided by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE). As of the last revision in the 2018 - 2019 academic year, Pragmatics and language teaching was included in the curriculum as a departmental elective course. We are sure that the course will fill a significant gap in the preparation of language teachers in Turkey.

We taught the course synchronously in our departments for the first time and felt the need for a comprehensive book that integrates pragmatics as a field of linguistic study and the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). Of course, there are various books on pragmatics written by scholars across the world. However, we wanted to address the need in the Turkish context. The very need for such a book has inspired us to prepare it. Therefore, we decided to be the editors of this book and invited scholars who study in this field in Turkey to write chapters based on their expertise in the field of Pragmatics. We are deeply grateful to all the contributors in this book for their support and hard work throughout the whole process of turning our ideas into reality.

The book is organized into fourteen chapters. Each chapter in the book not only provides a theoretical background to the topics studied in pragmatics but also showcases how to integrate pragmatics into language teaching. In order to enable this, there is an original and ready-to-use lesson plan designed by the author(s) at the end of each chapter. These lesson plans substantially exemplify how various topics of pragmatics can be used in language teaching for different proficiency levels.

The first chapter functions as a background to the book by defining Pragmatics as a field of linguistic study, highlighting key terms in the field, and presenting the relationship between Pragmatics and language teaching. Chapter 2 introduces maxims of conversation, types of deixis, and referential relations; explains why it is important to teach them in language classes; and further presents a sample lesson plan to teach maxims of conversation, help learners recognize and analyze maxims in a dialogue. The focus of Chapter 3 is Speech Act Theory. In the chapter, locutionary acts, types of speech acts, and classification of speech acts are explained through sample utterances from real life. The goal of the lesson plan attached to the chapter is to teach students how to compare direct/indirect complaints and make and respond to complaints in different situations in spoken/written language. Chapter 4 deals with Pragmatics and Metaphors by including a cognitive view of conceptual metaphors, metaphors across and within languages/cultures, pragmatic functions of metaphors, and implications for language teaching. The chapter aims to raise students' awareness of metaphorical conceptualizations in their native and target languages and help them notice different pragmatic uses of conceptual metaphors in various types of discourse. Chapter 5, entitled "Pragmatics and Macro-social Factors," presents how macro-social factors such as gender, age, social status, ethnicity, and regional contexts influence the interactions and shows how language use varies based on these factors. The chapter concludes with implications and provides a lesson plan for raising awareness on the issue of addressing. Chapter 6 draws the readers' attention to a linguistics theory, Functional Pragmatics, which views language as a form of human activity (Rehbein, 1977). The chapter mainly focuses on classroom discourse. It shows the relationship between the speaker (S) and the hearer (H) and how they negotiate the meaning. Chapter 7 draws the readers' attention to the relationship between pragmatics and discourse by presenting the common features and similarities between them and how they differ. The chapter discusses the significance of context and provides a broad overview of five recent approaches to pragmatics in the discourse: conversational analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, genre analysis, multimodal discourse analysis, and critical discourse analysis. Chapter 8 equips the readers with answers to the questions related to the acquisition of L2 pragmatics. These questions answered in this chapter are how L1 pragmatic development differs from L2 pragmatic development, what affects L2 pragmatic acquisition, whether there is a pragmatic transfer from L1 to L2, and so on.

The following chapter (9) enlightens the readers about pragmatics research. It provides a detailed discussion of research data collection methods and tools used in the field of pragmatics. Chapter 10 is focused on a relatively new and trending

topic that is corpus. After defining the concept of corpus pragmatics, it presents a broad understanding of how we can utilize corpora to teach L2 Pragmatics. Chapter 11 compares explicit and implicit teaching of pragmatics. It provides pedagogical insights and suggestions for the readers on how to teach pragmatics. The next chapter, chapter 12, digs into the language teaching materials and discusses how pragmatics deals with language teaching/learning materials. By showcasing the principles of material development and adaptation, the chapter helps the readers gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between pragmatics and language teaching materials, coursebooks, and resources used. Continuing with the theme of how to teach pragmatics, chapter 13 presents how language teachers can benefit from technology for pragmatics instruction. The chapter provides the readers with concrete examples of digital tools they can use in their teaching contexts. The last chapter of the book, Chapter 14, is on how to assess pragmatics in EFL teaching. It helps the readers be aware of which aspects of pragmatics to assess, the differences between traditional and novel assessment ideas to apply in the classroom, and an online application to use for assessing certain pragmatics skills.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation, first and foremost, and foremost to our contributors for being a part of this product which, we believe, is an immediate need for ELT departments in Turkey. We also want to thank the reviewers (in alphabetical order): Dr. Ahmet Başal, Dr. Ceyhun Yükselir, Dr. Elif Demirel, Dr. Gözde Ersoy, Dr. Hülya Özcan, Dr. Melike Baş, Meltem Eroğlu, Dr. Müzeyyen Nazlı Güngör, and Dr. Şevki Kömür who provided invaluable comments for our chapters. We would like to extend our special thanks to Dr. Hale Işık-Güler for the support she provided. Last but not least, we would like to thank our professor Şükriye Ruhi who enlightened our way in our journey of pragmatics.

CHAPTER 1

PRAGMATICS: AN INTRODUCTION

Şeyda Selen ÇİMEN & Betül BAL-GEZEGİN

Lead-in questions

1. Do you think that utterances may have several meanings depending on where, when, and by whom they are said? Can you give an example?
2. Think of the utterance “You can submit your reports by Monday, 5 p.m.” When, where and by whom could this sentence be uttered?
3. Have you ever experienced a conversation where you said something but the hearer understood it in a different way? What was the reason for this misunderstanding?

Objectives of the Chapter

By the end of the chapter, readers will be able to:

- reflect upon daily conversations with a pragmatic point of view,
- define and understand pragmatics as a field of linguistic study,
- differentiate between the scopes of pragmatics and semantics,
- notice the significance of incorporating pragmatics to language teaching.

Chapter Outline

1. Introduction
 - 1.1. What is Pragmatics?
 - 1.2. Defining Pragmatics
 - 1.3. History of Pragmatics
2. Key Terms in Pragmatics
 - 2.1. Context
 - 2.2. Utterance vs. Sentence Meaning
 - 2.3. Appropriateness
3. Semantics and Pragmatics
4. Pragmatics and Language Teaching
5. Conclusion

Key Terms: Pragmatics, Utterance, Context, Appropriateness, Semantics, Language Teaching

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter functions as the background for this book by introducing what pragmatics is, attempting to define it, explaining the key terms in pragmatics study, and discussing the significance of implementing pragmatics into the classroom.

1.1. What is Pragmatics?

Let's think over some questions to understand what pragmatics is as a field of linguistic study. Do we, as speakers, always mean what we say? Or do we, as listeners, always understand what the speaker says only by decoding the words s/he utters? Your possible answer is a big NO to these questions and the reason for this is that speakers usually intend to convey different meanings than what their words say in isolation. For instance, in the following utterance, said by a speaker while looking at her friend's bookshelf and upon seeing the latest book of a well-known novelist:

“I haven't read ‘Our Unexpected Brothers’ by Amin Maalouf, yet.”

She might be making an indirect request to borrow her friend's book beyond only informing her friend that she has not read it yet. Another well-known example

that shows we do not always mean what we say is the following question which is uttered at a dinner table:

“Can you pass the salt?”

Upon hearing this question, does the listener answer as “yes, I have the ability to pass the salt” or does s/he directly pass the salt to the speaker? Of course, the former would be odd and the latter would be the regular, appropriate action. Observing the exemplified situations, we can further question how the parties (speakers and listeners) in a conversation happen to mean and understand something that is beyond the actual meaning of words in isolation. It is obvious that we, as users of any language, can do it by using our (implicit) knowledge of pragmatics.

Considering the above-mentioned questions and situations, we have started to understand what pragmatics is and what it studies. Now, let's try to define pragmatics as a field of study.

1.2. Defining Pragmatics

There are various definitions made by scholars and each one emphasizes different aspects of pragmatics. Some scholars take the *user* aspect at the center and define pragmatics in relation to language users. For instance, Crystal (1997, p.301) defines it as “the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication.” On the other hand, some definitions emphasize the aspect of *context* and its relationship with the language. Forrester (1996, p.54) defines pragmatics as “the study of grammatical relations between language structure and context.” *Appropriateness* is another aspect that is focused on in defining pragmatics. Ellis (1994, p.23) states that “pragmatics is particularly concerned with appropriateness, both with regard to what is said in a particular context and how it is said.” A definition of pragmatics that emphasizes one aspect of it would be inadequate to understand what pragmatics actually does and studies. Therefore, a comprehensive and inclusive definition is needed to have an understanding of pragmatics. In his comprehensive definition and one of the most favored ones, Levinson (1983, p.24) explains, “pragmatics is the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate.”

Furthermore, Yule (1996) talks about four areas that pragmatics is concerned with and explains how pragmatics is intertwined with each of these areas. Therefore, it is possible to make an inclusive definition of pragmatics by summarizing