

BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY, CLUJ-NAPOCA
FACULTY OF LETTERS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Ph.D. DISSERTATION
ABSTRACT

*MULTICULTURAL PATTERNS AND THEIR CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES -
FLOUTING THE MAXIMS OF CONVERSATION*

SUPERVISOR

Professor Mihai M. Zdrenghea

CANDIDATE
Maria Cristina Căpîlnean
(căs. Dolcoș)

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CONCLUSIONS

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Keywords: Pragmatics, The Cooperative Principle, The Maxims of Conversation, Flouting Maxims, Conversational Implicatures, Speech Acts, Conversation Analysis, Context, Communication

The present Ph.D paper, **MULTICULTURAL PATTERNS AND THEIR CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES - FLOUTING THE MAXIMS OF CONVERSATION** deals with the way Conversational Implicatures work in different multicultural environments. The latter are approached under the form of multicultural patterns which are analyzed by taking into account different linguistic tools such as the context, which may refer to the physical context, the epistemic context, the linguistic context and the social context. Our analysis has focused on the epistemic context and the linguistic context while

nevertheless tackling both the physical and the social contexts. Flouting the maxims of conversation in the case of multicultural pattern also plays a very important role in the scientific approach we have endeavored.

The structure of the present work

The present work is organized into an introductory part then five chapters, each of these containing subchapters, conclusions and bibliography.

The first chapter, *Pragmatics – Theoretical Background* focuses on different definitions associated with pragmatics. The subchapter **Defining Pragmatics** offers a framework of reference to what Pragmatics as a linguistic discipline is. Jacob Mey talks about pragmatics as a “relatively young science”, a “truly catholic discipline” in view of being a descendant of philosophy and linguistics (Mey, 1938: 28).

Pragmatics is the study of the relation between the structure of a semiotic system and its usage in context, and along with semantics, forms part of general theory of the meaning. Pragmatics is concerned with implicit meaning, with inference and the unsaid, and the way in which language structure trades on this background of the presumed and the inferred.

Pragmatics occupies an important part in general linguistic theory because it had substantial intrinsic subject matter, it promises explanation for other linguistic phenomena and as a response to over-idealization in contemporary grammatical theory. Pragmatics has also fundamental contributions from philosophy of language, linguistics and the sociology of language, being an area of interdisciplinary concern. One of the criteria that are issued for defining pragmatics is the meaning criteria. The main differences proposed between semantic and pragmatic meaning are that pragmatic meanings and semantic meanings are not context dependent, and that semantic meanings are and pragmatic meanings are not truth conditional. Semantic meanings have also been claimed to be primarily, whereas pragmatic meanings are considered secondary.

The research on the semantic and pragmatic interface led to the pragmatic turn orientation in the domains of conceptualization of syntax, dynamic semantics and pragmatics, two-dimensional semantics and pragmatics, the study of presupposition, meaning and truth

conditions, compositionally and intentionally contexts, literal and non-literal distinctions, to name only a few conspicuous examples. The most important pragmatic issues such as Conversational Implicature, Conversational Maxims, Speech Acts and so on are also addressed so that they might be proved useful in the analysis we have attempted.

Chapter 2, *Pragmatics and the Societal Context* provides a survey of the connection between Pragmatics as a linguistic discipline and the societal context. **The Socio-Cognitive Approach to Pragmatics** relies on both social and cultural norms. Social norms can be viewed as explicit or implicit statements or rules for when something should or could be said and the manner in which it would be expected to be said.

These norms are based on some degree of group consensus and influence societal behavior. Traditions, customs, beliefs, values and thought patterns contribute to the definition of the cultural norms. Even native speakers may vary among themselves as to how they perform pragmatic routines in a given discourse situation, there is not necessarily language behavior which would be deemed absolutely, right or wrong in a given case. The norms of the community tend to make certain pragmatic behavior more or less preferred or appropriate in a given context by speakers of that community.

Pragmatics – the Study of Human Communication highlights the fact that social interaction is conducted through language. It is in and through language that most of the actions we perform are done. Through language we ask and answer questions, request help, give instructions, report problems make jokes explain who and what we are, and so on. Language is fundamental to everything that is done in social life, as members of society we live our social lives by talking to and with others. Every day we engage in insignificant activities as well as in significant ones. For example, through language we are able to do things like chatting with a friend or asking the time, but also things like answering the questions in a job interview or proposing marriage. It is not just the activities of individuals that are dependent upon language.

The speaker-hearer perspective of the socio-cognitive approach requires a revision design and intention recognition views espoused by current pragmatics theories. In socio-cognitive approach, the speaker's utterance is the result of an interpreting commitment that is a private reaction to a communicative situation, as it is expressed in lexical items that are affected by the mechanism of salience.

While talking about **Global and Intercultural Communication** the main idea is centered around the fact that in today's world, all societies are multicultural in nature and everyone lives within a global village. Culture, which encompasses a particular social group's accepted beliefs and behaviors, has been defined in many ways. The classic definition most useful is one derived from anthropology. Culture is "a way of group of people (...) the stereotyped patterns of learning behavior, which are handed down from one generation to the next through means of language and imitation" (Barnow, 1963:4).

The institutional structures, like economic organization, the legal system, political and educational structures are also possible through language. Such institutions themselves consist of activities of various kinds: business meetings, courtroom trials, parliamentary debates and classroom lessons, which are conducted through the use of language. Social life is permeated by language at every level. As members of society, we use language to describe, question or explain what is going on around us, as well to perform actions that others may then describe, question or explain. The relation between language and the social life is a mutually constitutive one. Without language there could not be social life. Conversely, without social life there would not be use of language, since it is communication that lies at the heart of language. Through language persons are able to communicate with one another, we need to communicate because we lead social live together and it is linguistic communication that makes social life what it is.

Chapter 3, Conversational Analysis in Pragmatics also provides a linguistic framework. Conversational Analysis is presented from a theoretical point of view, as together with the Discourse Analysis theoretical background will supply working tools and a theoretical framework which the analysis of multicultural patterns is based on. As a starting point, it is proved that the primary focus of research in Conversation Analysis is talk rather than language.

As Sacks (1968) stresses, talking topically and talking about some topic chosen by another speaker is not the same thing at all. One can perfectly well have a sequence in which successive speakers talk in a way topically coherent with the last utterance, but in which each speaker talks on a different topic. Speakers are aware of this as a problem and have ways of formulating a topic to make it more likely that other speakers will talk to it.

Close to the notion of talk, further on Pragmatics is taken into account, and here some of the most important pragmatic issues are thoroughly presented, i.e. *The Aim of Conversation*

Analysis, Turn-taking, Preference organization, Adjacency pairs, Insertion sequences, Topic change, Topic Conflict and so on.

Chapter 4, Communication, contexts and cultures focuses on the analysis of the problem of intercultural communication which depends on the clarification of the relationship between communication and culture. The question whether communication is only one subordinate element of culture, and, if so, is intercultural communication only one of many paths between cultures is also addressed. Moreover, we have also questioned if culture is to be considered as one sub-system of the communication system, and intercultural communication as something similar to an interpenetration between systems? Or is culture at the very bottom of society, so that real intercultural communication falls prey to cultural relativism and becomes virtually impossible? The relationship between culture and communication may appear obvious, if not trivial, to those influenced by the ideas of postmodernism, post-structuralism or cultural studies. However, even contemporary theoreticians like Richard Rorty still refer to culture in terms of science, philosophy or the arts.

With the "discovery" of everyday life, sociology came to stress culture as something linked to meaningful or symbolic action. Yet the shift towards communication would not have been possible without the strong impact of Saussurian linguistics on anthropology (Lévi-Strauss), which came to consider culture in terms of the linguistic structure of "langue". Before Lévi-Strauss, culture was understood as a system of meaning to be learned by its members; afterwards it was understood to be a system of signs. The paradigm above is characterised by the idea that culture is being constructed in communicative actions.

Although in English the notion of communication may be mistakenly understood to refer to a cybernetic model of information transmission, communicative action is meant here to include the performance of social action in the use of language as well as nonverbal signs, cultural objects and artefacts; the theory thus makes reference to the theories of social action developed by Max Weber and Alfred Schütz. Communication by different interactive media, such as the telephone or the use of mass media (television, radio, newspapers) enables this kind of ethnicity to be contextualised as a "community of the mind", a speech community sharing communicative habits by way of mediated communicative actions. Mediated and mass communication are also the means by which the symbolic reality of speech communities may be

produced. Thus Anderson (1983) has shown how newspapers, book print and other forms of media communication lead to the construction of an imagined community on a larger scale, such as "nation". Ethnographic analyses of communication in various sociocultural life worlds may be an empirical way of understanding cultural difference — whether or not the difference is a relevant feature of an actor's communication. Either way, the implication is that cultures in modern societies are structurally characterised by pluralism.

On this basis, we have intended to develop a notion of communicative action which can provide a general framework for analysing intercultural communication. Communicative action will be shown to construct contexts which are reflexively generated by the very communicative actions which are performed in this context. This reflexive process will be referred to as "contextualisation". At an analytic level, one can distinguish three different analytical aspects of communicative actions referring to the different ways in which contextualisation is achieved. Culture can thus be considered as the construction of contexts by means of communicative action.

Chapter 5: Conversational Implicatures & Conversational Maxims & Flouting Conversational Maxims in Different Cultural Contexts focuses on the body of analysis for different Conversational Analysis elements, their conversational maxims and the moment when these maxims are flouted or violated. This chapter is based on the linguistic tools that have been dealt with in the previous chapters. In this chapter we have tried to illustrate how conversational maxims and conversational implicatures fit and work in different cultural contexts. Thus we have dealt with the physical contexts of the selected texts, the purpose of the conversation in that very context. Contexts such as budgets of medical services, political environment, social issues, literary texts, criminal cases, business styles have been carefully selected and analysed upon. Here we have also employed pragmatics issues such as the politeness strategies which play a very important role in the context of the pragmatic strategies that round up the conversational implicatures.

As a conclusion, we may assume that communication is the result of the interplay of intention and attention, as this interplay is motivated by the individuals' socio-cultural background. This approach integrates the pragmatic view of cooperation and the cognitive view

of egocentrism and emphasizes that both cooperation and egocentrism are manifested in all phases of communication.

Linguists study intercultural communication for its applied significance, which is enormous, given the heterogeneity of societies affected by global migrations and increasingly intercultural nature of commerce, diplomacy, and personal relationships throughout the world. The intercultural communication provides a discourse analog to the starred sentence in a linguistic argumentation. By examining interactions in which habits and expectations about how to show what is meant by what is said are not shared, we can see semantic processes – how language means – which are harder to observe in the seamless surface of successful communication.

It is evident then that the multicultural patterns and their conversational implicatures play a very important role in everyday conversation in different contexts. Moreover, they play an even greater role in multicultural environments where the context is in the centre of decoding the message. The moment in which the maxims of conversation are flouted holds the floor of understanding the whole message and this deserves further investigations.

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