Pragmatics: An Advanced Resource Book for Students
Dawn Archer, Karin Aijmer, and Anne Wichmann (2012)
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Reviewed by Wu Yaxin

Since Pragmatics (Levinson, 1983), generally regarded as the first textbook of pragmatics, many introductory books of pragmatics have been written from different angles, with various foci, and aimed at a wide readership (Leech, 1983; Mey, 1993; Thomas, 1995; Grundy, 1995; Sperber & Wilson, 1995; Green, 1996; Verschueren, 1999; Huang, 2007). Against this background, Pragmatics: An Advanced Resource Book for Students is comparatively original with its cross-referenced contents, wide coverage of updated topics, enlightening tasks for readers, and well-selected literature from the ever-expanding field of pragmatics.

This book is in the Routledge Applied Linguistics Series. All the books in this series guide students of the different fields of applied linguistics by means of three facets: preliminary concepts, classic thoughts, and innovative explorations, the relationship among which is that the former is the foundation of the latter. The hierarchical structure of the book is achieved by the authors' thoughtful organisation of the contents into three sections.

Section A includes 12 units, covering origins of pragmatics, research methods, semantic-pragmatic interface, speech acts, implicature, pragmatics and discourse, pragmatic markers, facework and im/politeness, pragmatics of prosody and ges-
ture, cross-cultural pragmatics, historical pragmatics, pragmatics and power.

The book starts with an introduction to the origins of pragmatics, and the widely accepted one is from the philosopher Charles Morris's tripartite division of semiotics. Pragmatics is differently viewed by the Anglo-American tradition and the Continental tradition. The former regards pragmatics as merely the study of meaning that cannot be covered by truth-conditional semantics, while the latter defines pragmatics as a special perspective on different aspects of linguistic communication (cf. Verschueren, 1999). The authors attribute the fast expansion of pragmatics to the context-dependency of data analysis and the diversity of meaning in human communication. Being interdisciplinary is a salient feature of pragmatics today, which can be evidenced by the emergence of clinical pragmatics, developmental pragmatics, interpersonal pragmatics (cf. Journal of Pragmatics, Volume 58, special issue, 2013), etc.

Having presented the general landscape of pragmatics, the authors continue with an introduction to the research methods of pragmatics, covering data collection, data transcription, and data analyses both qualitative and quantitative.

After the methodological issues of pragmatics, the authors address the topics transcending the semantic-pragmatic interface, including reference, deixis, and presupposition, which may be interpreted from both truth-conditional semantics and context-dependent pragmatics. As a matter of fact, the distinction between what is said and what is meant is a hotly debated issue in pragmatics (Grice, 1975; Levinson, 1983, 2000; Horn, 1984; Sperber & Wilson, 1995).

Unit A4 of this book illustrates Austin’s idea of “saying is doing” by distinguishing sentences into performatives and constatives and later analysing speech acts from the layers of locution, illocution, and perlocution. As a follower of Austin, John Searle developed Speech Act theory into Indirect Speech Act theory with his own classification and felicity conditions for different speech acts. What makes the book special and enlightening is that the authors allocate a large proportion of the content to critcising the theory, by presenting a full-fledged view of speech acts from many angles including sociopragmatics, conversation analysis, varitional pragmatics, etc.

Unit A5 traces back to the thoughts of another natural language philosopher, H. Paul Grice. The distinction between natural meaning (meaning_{n}) and non-natural meaning (meaning_{nn}), the Cooperative Principle and its maxims constitute Grice’s influential theory of implicature. Based on a review of Grice’s discussion of conventional and conversational implicatures, this section also reviews the development of implicature theories or neo-Gricean pragmatics from Leech’s Politeness Principle (1983), Horn’s Quantity Principle and Relation Principle (1984), and Levinson’s Principles of Quantity, Informativeness and Manner (1983), through to the later post-Gricean pragmatics of Sperber & Wilson’s Relevance Principle (1995).
After reviewing the core issues in pragmatic tradition, some peripheral but attention-grabbing topics are touched upon in the following parts of Section A. Unit A6 delineates the general picture of Discourse Analysis (DA) and Conversation Analysis (CA). The DA model is based on Sinclair and Coulthard’s Rank Scale model which includes lesson, transaction, exchange, move, act hierarchically from high to low (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). Unit A7 briefs researchers on pragmatic markers in terms of their definition, characteristics, functions, sociolinguistic variation and their relation to text type. Another often-mentioned topic in pragmatics is politeness, which is what Unit A8 is about. What makes this textbook special is that the authors supplement theories of impoliteness while introducing and assessing Leech’s Politeness Principle and the Facework theories of Goffman, Brown, and Levinson. The issue of impoliteness mainly introduces Culpeper’s Anatomy of Impoliteness and its criticism from Mills (2003) and Bousfield (2008) in terms of its decontextualisation and ignorance of purposefulness in definition respectively. The relation between impoliteness and verbal aggression is also addressed, and the postmodern perspective stressing hearers’ perception of impoliteness is also encompassed. Unit A9 gives another innovative bonus to a pragmatic textbook: here the prosodic meanings of language use are discussed in relation to pauses, information structure, speech acts and implicature, social rituals, discourse markers, and conversation management. The non-verbal aspects of communication like gaze and gesture are also treated briefly. Units A10–A12 consist of three interdisciplinary approaches to pragmatics: cross-cultural pragmatics, historical pragmatics, and critical pragmatics. Culturally, the comparative studies of speech acts in different cultures have been an important issue in cross-cultural pragmatics (Blum-Kullka, House, & Kasper, 1989), while the authors of this book review the cultural peculiarities of address forms, backchannels, silence, interruptions, prosody, etc. Historically, language uses can be studied both diachronically and synchronically. The former traces certain forms or functions across time, or the pragmaticalisation of language, the latter studies the pragmatics of a specific historical period of time. Critically, pragmatics also investigates power in talk, mainly the discursive strategies employed by speakers helping them to enforce their power.

Section B, with Expansion as its title, has a parallel structure to the first section, expanding readers’ vision and enriching readers’ understanding of the previously introduced 12 topics. The authors display their originality in compiling this book by their well-selected excerpts from the representative publications of respective fields of pragmatics. Concerning the origin of pragmatics, Unit B1 selects two extracts, the first of which from Nerlich (2010) discusses the five approaches to pragmatics, namely, the British approaches of ordinary language philosophy and contextualism and functionalism, the French approach of enunciation, subjectivity, and indexicals, the German approach of the agenthood of (transcendental)
subject, dialogue, pronouns, speech act, and the American approach of meaning as action and the triadic sign relation. The second extract from Leech (1983) delimits the field of pragmatics by contrasting pragmatics with semantics and grammar in the general background of linguistics. Unit B2 informs readers about the data-collection method of Discourse Completion Task (DCT), data collected for experimental pragmatics, and the application of historical corpus data to the study of historical pragmatics through the innovative research of Kasper (2000), van der Henst and Sperber (2004), and Kohnen (2009). Unit B3 familiarises readers with the boundary between semantics and pragmatics and the semantic–pragmatic debates triggered by the properties of presupposition and deixis. Unit B4 details research on speech acts with three original studies of complimenting and expressing gratitude, in which the DCT method and field note method in data collection are also used and evaluated. Unit B5 discusses Grice's motivation for his Cooperative Principle (CP), Leech's explanation for his Politeness Principle as a complement to and revision of the CP, and Wilson's cognitive approach to the interpretation of human communication, namely, relevance theory. Unit B6 talks about the motivation for the proposal of the Initiation-Response-Follow-up exchange structure in Discourse Analysis and Conversation Analysis, supported by specific studies of the functions of follow-up move, prefaces, and backchannels. Unit B7 provides further readings on discourse markers, focusing on the pragmatic functions of ‘I don’t know’ and ‘like’ as discourse markers, and hesitation markers as interlanguage. Related to facework and im/politeness, Unit B8 analyses the relation between ‘being politic’ and ‘being salient’, both in facework terms. The suggested conclusion is that they both are sensitive to sociocultural and activity-specific expectations and interpersonal differences. Unit B9 reveals the attitudinal and emotional meaning of intonation. Unit B10 deepens readers’ understanding of cross-cultural pragmatics through pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failures in terms of directness, pragmatic principles, and body language in different cultures. Unit B11 reiterates historical pragmatics from its foci of grammaticalisation or pragmaticalisation, and the reliability and limitations of a historical corpus. Unit B12 expounds the concept of power in the data of political speech and court and police interviews. Power is generally bestowed on certain social roles and can be realised by discursive means.

With its aim of developing readers’ research competence, Section C, Exploration, designs concrete tasks for readers to handle, involving the nine topics, excluding origins of pragmatics, semantic-pragmatic interface, and historical pragmatics. The authors in Unit C1 instruct their readers to create corpora by means of Internet sources and the discourse completion task, and to transcribe and annotate the data collected. Based on a specific corpus, questions are raised in Unit C2 for readers to explore routinised speech acts, like compliments, request-
ing, and thanking, and to make their own findings. Tests used by experimental pragmatics are introduced in Unit C3, and readers are asked to re-do those tests checking the hypothesis about implicature made by Horn, Sperber, and Wilson, and to compare their results and those of the previous studies. Topics concerning discourse structures are revisited in Unit C4, focusing on the frequencies of prefaces in a conversation, the differences of response items in British and American Englishes, the sequences of telephone openings and closings, and the power relation displayed by questions in institutional settings. The prototypical features and textual and social functions of pragmatic markers are reconsidered through examining the data provided in Unit C5. The authors suggest using corpora to study how politicians use language to protect their own face and the reputation of their party in Unit C6. The controversial debate about the explanatory power of Leech’s model of politeness to the issues of impoliteness is also reviewed. It is said that Leech’s model cannot account for impoliteness due to his emphasis on socially motivated cooperation (Bousfield, 2008). Unit C7 observes the pragmatic meaning of paralinguistic means, the deictic meaning of pointing, the variations of non-verbal greeting behaviours in different situations, the distancing tool of reported speech and mimicry, response tokens, and vocalisation in communication. Unit C8 designs tasks for readers to find differences of address forms and the use of directives in different cultures, thus to deepen their understanding of the context-dependency of pragmatic meaning. Unit C9, the last section of the book, further explores power in the political context and in the media. More specifically, ‘othering’ and war-related issues are investigated using data collected from corpora.

*Pragmatics: An Advanced Resource Book for Students* exhibits its peculiarities in its structure, topics, ideas, functionality, and practicality. In terms of structure of the book, the Introduction-Expansion-Exploration organisation provides readers with a step-by-step, from-basic-to-innovative, way to the land of pragmatics. This book cultivates its readers not merely as knowledge pursuers, but also as pragmatic researchers. The topics in this book are well selected too. With the fast development of pragmatic research, canonical issues like deixis, implicature, speech act, presupposition, and politeness cannot reflect the real picture of pragmatics today. The authors make the book more full-fledged by adding the hot topics of recent years, like impoliteness, pragmatic markers, pragmatics and discourse, pragmatics of prosody and gesture, and the hyphenated sub-branches of pragmatics, like cross-cultural pragmatics, historical pragmatics, and critical pragmatics. The pragmatic ideas presented in this book are not conservative but challenging, not traditional but controversial. Concerning its readership, it is suitable for newcomers to the pragmatic field and is also handy and helpful to those who have already acquired basic knowledge about pragmatics and plan to
do independent research. The enlightening tasks inserted are just like research projects for future researchers. The critical way of presenting the classic thoughts arouses the critical thinking of its audiences. Further readings provided at the end of each unit in Section B save the readers much effort in familiarising themselves with the specific topic.

All in all, this book is an academic work of pragmatics, insightful, enlightening, and user friendly.

References


