

THE POTENTIAL OF LINGUOPRAGMATICS

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Annotation

This article provides information about pragmatics as a theory of speech activity, its subject matter, and related research. Although many scholars analyze pragmatics, they often do not address or tend to avoid discussing its subject matter. Only in the works of a limited number of linguists can references to the subject of pragmatics be observed. The analyses presented in the article help to form a clear understanding of the subject of pragmatics.

Keywords

language, semiotics, pragmatics, subject matter, linguistic signs, pragmatic theories, sentence sign and proposition, text, speech performance, deictic features.

Introduction

Linguists express diverse views regarding the subject matter of pragmatics. This may be due to the specific nature of pragmatics itself. Its varying interpretations in different sources are, of course, also related to the scope of its study. However, although many scholars analyze pragmatics, they often do not address its subject matter or tend to avoid it. Only in the works of a limited number of linguists can one detect references to the subject of pragmatics. Based on such analyses, we attempt to form a clear understanding of the subject of pragmatics.

Literature Review

One of the scholars who seriously addressed the issue of defining the subject of pragmatics was G. Klaus. In his work, he defines pragmatics as “the science that studies the relations between signs (Z) and the individuals (M) who create, transmit, and interpret these linguistic signs” [1967:215]. As seen from this definition, in determining the subject of pragmatics, G. Klaus, like other semioticians, does not move away from the relationship between the sign and its interpreter. Even his conclusion that “pragmatics primarily studies the psychological and sociological aspects of linguistic signs” demonstrates a narrow interpretation of the concept of pragmatics [2008:57].

J.Katz, who studied the relationship between propositional content underlying speech acts and the expression of communicative intention (illocution), views the subject of pragmatics through the opposition of linguistic competence and performance as proposed in Chomsky’s theory [1962; 1981]. According to him, pragmatic theory allows the limitation of sentence meaning depending on its utterance within a specific context. “Grammar is the study of sentence structure, whereas pragmatics, on the contrary, does not deal with the construction of linguistic structures or their grammatical properties and relations. Pragmatic theories study how the coherence between sentence form and proposition in a text is rationally ensured by the speaker and the listener. In this sense, pragmatic theory is a part of the theory of speech activity (performance)” [2008:57, 69].



Research Methodology

It would not be incorrect to say that the study of the subject of pragmatics in Russian linguistics began with the Moscow Semiotic School. As I. P. Susov notes, “the Moscow Semiotic School is essentially Y. D. Apresyan.” In 1963, J. J. Katz and J. Fodor consciously defined semantics as follows: “Semantics is the reflection of grammar in linguistic description.” At that time, Chomsky’s descriptive linguistics and generative grammar had not yet fully developed into the study of the immanent system of language [1962:192]. Many linguists briefly stated that pragmatics is studied in language use.

S.C. Levinson initially approached the subject of pragmatics in the traditional Anglo-Saxon sense — as language use [2013:438]. However, realizing the incompleteness of this definition, he later specified the subject of pragmatics as follows:

1. The grammaticalized relationship between language and context, including deixis, presupposition, speech acts, conversational implicature, and issues of sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics.
2. The aspect of meaning not fully covered by semantic rules, including conventional implicature, presupposition, utterance interpretation, irony, and metaphor.
3. The role of human cognition in language understanding, including presupposition, implicature, and illocutionary force.
4. The ability of language users to establish effective connections between utterances and context (communicative competence and cultural specificity).
5. Aspects such as deixis, implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and conversational structure.

These analyses show that Levinson emphasized the role of context and discourse in understanding the communicative function of language.

Analysis and Results

Pragmatics is closely related to semantics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics, yet it does not merge with them. It operates within linguistic rules [2006:29]. J.N. Leech includes pragmatics within linguistics and describes it as the study of utterances in communicative situations. He distinguishes two groups of pragmatic principles: interpersonal rhetoric (cooperative principle, politeness principle, irony) and textual rhetoric (process, clarity, and expressiveness principles).

Leech also adopts the concept of “illocutionary force” introduced by J.L. Austin and J.R. Searle, as well as Grice’s notion of “conversational implicature.” He differentiates between semantic representation and pragmatic interpretation, emphasizing that semantics operates in a “sign-object” relation, while pragmatics involves a “sign-object-speaker” triad.

V.V. Bogdanov defines the subject of pragmatics as the relationship between communicants and speech acts, including communicative goals, time and place of speech, knowledge level, social status, and psychological characteristics. These factors are united under the concept of context.

N.D. Arutyunova also examines pragmatics broadly, focusing on the relationships between speaker, listener, and communicative situation. She highlights aspects such as illocutionary force, speech interpretation, perlocutionary effects, social etiquette, and situational context.

N.M. Vakhtel introduces the concept of *pragmeme* as the minimal unit of pragmalinguistics that conveys evaluative meaning and reflects the speaker’s attitude. E.S. Aznaurova emphasizes that communication is fundamentally activity-based and context-dependent.

In Uzbek linguistics, A. Nurmonov identifies presupposition as a key object of pragmatics, closely connected to semantics and context. M. Hakimov also notes that interest in pragmatics



has increased due to studies on context and presupposition. Sh.Safarov defines pragmatics as the study of the selection and use of linguistic units in communication and their impact on participants, emphasizing its functional nature.

Conclusion

The views of linguists from different traditions provide a comprehensive understanding of pragmatics and its subject matter. The analysis shows that scholars approach pragmatics broadly, focusing on its manifestation in various forms of speech activity. Since language is a system of signs, the subject of pragmatics should include all elements involved in communication—sign, object, speaker, and speech activity. Each of these elements plays a crucial role within context and discourse, and without them, communication cannot occur. Therefore, it is appropriate to define the subject of pragmatics as encompassing signs, objects, speakers, and speech activity. As noted by Sh.Safarov, the subject of pragmatic research remains relevant. V.G.Gak also emphasizes that the pragmatic approach reveals aspects of language that traditional grammar could not fully explain, opening new perspectives for linguistic analysis.

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