

Cornelia Ilie, Neal R. Norrick (eds), *Pragmatics and its Interfaces*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2018, 313 p.

“Is discourse analysis a part of pragmatics or the other way around? (...) Isn't interactional sociolinguistics roughly the same as pragmatics in action? Where does conversation analysis (and CA) fit in? If you study variation in responses to invitations across age groups, are you doing pragmatics, politeness theory or sociolinguistics? (...)” (p. 2-3)

These questions and others related to the cross-disciplinarity of pragmatics, which are put in the introduction of the volume *Pragmatics and its Interfaces* edited by Cornelia Ilie and Neal Norrick, frame the 12 studies written by scholars well known in their field of expertise. The questions also highlight the relevance of the volume, which provides an insightful overview of the current research in pragmatics, and which is focused on discussing the commonalities, differences, overlaps and potentials for further intersections of pragmatics with adjacent fields of linguistics.

As the editors state in their introduction, *Pragmatics and its Interfaces* complements earlier publications that assessed the relationship of pragmatics to other disciplines, e.g., the work of Kecskes & Assimakopoulos that examined pragmatics and its intercultural dimensions (2017)<sup>1</sup>. The present volume, however, focuses neither on a specific interface of pragmatics nor on an evaluation of the impact of the discipline on specific research fields. What *Pragmatics and its Interfaces* focuses on is an assessment of the intersections, overlapping and ‘pollination’ of pragmatics research with its neighboring disciplines. These are, namely, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, rhetoric, narrative studies, translation studies, gesture studies, anthropology, politeness theory, corpus linguistics, internet-mediated communication and humor theory.

These are also the focus of the twelve chapters, each of which reflects on the boundaries and the connections of its discipline with pragmatics. Each chapter also highlights the potentials as well as the challenges involved in working at this intersection of the disciplines. To this end, each contribution demonstrates how – on both the theoretical and the methodological levels – pragmatics is complementary (within their difference) to each discipline, illustrating their insights with relevant examples.

In chapter one, titled “Sociolinguistics vs. pragmatics: Where does the boundary lie?”, Janet Holmes envisions sociopragmatics as

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<sup>1</sup> Kecskes, I., Assimakopoulos, S. (eds), *Current Issues in Intercultural Pragmatics*, John Benjamins, 2017.

a promising field, one that would combine macro-sociolinguistics, concerned with social, institutional and ideological constraints with micro-pragmatics, understood here as related to “the cognitive processes involved in inferring meaning from language” (p. 27). Using examples from her project the *Language in the Workplace* carried out in New Zealand, Holmes explains how the theoretical framework used in that project – critical / social realism – enables the researcher to unravel the ways in which macro-level societal norms are instantiated, negotiated or resisted at the micro-level of face-to-face interaction. To illustrate this theoretical framework, she shows how these high order societal norms and expectations regarding egalitarianism and the “gender order” in New Zealand society are sociopragmatically instantiated or negotiated.

Chapter two, by Anita Fezter, is titled “Discourse pragmatics: Communicative action meets discourse analysis”. Here the interpenetration of discourse analysis and pragmatics is discussed, and for her analysis the author draws on an impressive range of analytical frameworks. Based on earlier research, a pragmatics-based theory of discourse is hypothesized; this theory, which is centered around the notion of context (including linguistic, cognitive, sociocultural and social contexts) is presented as essential to any investigation of discourse. Indeed, since discourse analysis is intrinsically pragmatic, analysis should focus on “communicative actions and performance of texts in context” (p. 35). Thus, redefining pragmatics as “the study of discourse-dependent meaning in context” (*ibid.*), and discourse as “context-dependent and a communicative action”, Fezter examines the speech act/discourse interface to demonstrate their discourse-structuring functions, while she also explores questions of granularity with respect to content and force. She argues that extending the frame from speech act to discourse, and from communicative intention to discourse purpose is a necessary step if discourse as a whole is to be examined (p. 44). She provides examples from British political discourse to illustrate the analysis of higher level illocutionary acts, or macro speech acts (or discourse genre), and their cognitive, conventional and social effects.

In chapter three, “Pragmatics and conversation analysis”, Paul Drew demonstrates with short examples how Conversation Analysis (CA) can enhance our understanding of core concepts in pragmatics, namely, implicatures, speech acts, presupposition and well-formedness. More specifically, CA adds *sequential analysis*, which focuses on how participants *orient* to implicature, to action and to well-formedness. If we take the example of implicatures drawn from participants’ inferences, they will differ among participants just as the actions chosen to respond to such implicatures will differ. Indeed, inferences depend on the individual participants: the same utterance

can be interpreted as a positive assessment and the response to that utterance will be a positive reaction (such as thanking); likewise it can be interpreted as a criticism and the answer will be a defensive move. This CA interactional perspective on the three key topics in pragmatics complements the pragmatic conception and analysis of the same topics: turns are therefore *moves* within a *process of sequential interactions*. Drew also suggests that the empirical turn of pragmatics can in part be attributed to conversation analysis (CA).

The interface of rhetoric and pragmatics is the focus of the next chapter, “Pragmatics vs rhetoric: Political discourse at the pragmatics-rhetoric interface”, in which Cornelia Ilie argues for an integrative analytical approach (called pragma-rhetoric) to political discourse and a rhetorical perspectivisation of pragmatic analysis and a pragmatic systematisation of rhetorical practice (p. 92). Both fields aim at understanding and explaining the ways meaningful interpersonal interaction are co-constructed, but each adopts a different perspective – which Ilie proves are in fact complementary. Indeed, drawing on pragmatic approaches, such as goal-oriented speech act theory, and on rhetorical approaches, such as dialogue-based argumentation mechanisms and figurative language, the pragma-rhetorical analysis is proven capable of accounting for strategies used in political interviews and in parliamentary debates in an innovative and fruitful fashion. More precisely, Ilie examines the contextualization strategies through meaning negotiation and re-negotiation in political interviews with Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama during the 2008 US presidential campaign. Such a close examination of the discourse strategies illustrates the interplay between rhetoric (aimed at persuasion and using rhetoric *topoi* and arguments) and pragmatics (focused here on illocutionary force of speech acts and pronominal deixis). Metadiscourse framing strategies in question-answer sequencing in UK parliamentary debates between Prime Minister Gordon Brown and David Cameron are also investigated. This pragma-rhetorical proposal challenges the misconception that pragmatics takes an exclusively bottom-up perspective, and also adopts a top-down perspective by blending analytical tools used in rhetoric into a pragmatic analysis.

In the chapter “Narrative studies versus pragmatics (of narrative)”, Neal R. Norrick draws commonalities between conversation analysis (CA) and psycholinguistic approaches to conversational narrative through bottom-up and top-down discussions of the direct and indirect illocutionary acts that occur when telling stories. Adopting first a bottom-up approach, Norrick explains the complementarity of both fields using examples of micro-analytic discursive dimensions such as the role of repetitions, tense shifts or discourse markers. Using a top-down approach, he analyzes the recurrent functions of stories, reframing them as direct and indirect speech acts according to

cultural contexts or speech events. Acknowledging that his conclusions require more data to fully substantiate them, Norrick summarized his findings on narratives as follows: 1) stories generally perform representative acts directly (such as making excuses); 2) narratives perform expressive acts both indirectly (such as apologizing) and directly (such as warning); 3) narratives do not perform the indirect force of commissives and declarations.

In the fifth chapter, “Translation studies and pragmatics”, Juliane House revisits the interdisciplinary and multi-faceted concept of “context”, a concern of many chapters in this volume. Such an important concept should form an integrative part of any theory of translation and, indeed, translation can be defined as a communicative event that requires *recontextualisation*. Context can be understood as the frames and discourses of a language; because these are specific and often unique to every language they are important in the process of translation. In effect, therefore, a translated text is in a “double bind” since it is contextually bound to its original context, and at the same time it is bound to the contextual conditions of the recipients. This leads to the conclusion that translating is essentially re-contextualizing – a process that can be achieved either covertly or overtly. Overt translations do not address the receptors of the text, but involve a transfer of the original text into the medium of the target language context; as such they allow a lingua-cultural transfer by juxtaposing the two different contexts. On the other hand, covert translations, essential in an empirical contrastive-pragmatic approach, strive to keep the function of the source text equivalent in the translation text; they make use of a cultural filter, which takes into account the context-derived communicative norms of the target language. As a final remark, House points out the Anglophone influence at the level of language, culture and scientific research; this impact affects as well at the level of pragmatics since overt translation of texts from English takes on an increasingly important role while the future of covert translation seems more uncertain.

Chapter six, “Pragmatics and gesture studies”, focuses on the dynamics of verbal and non-verbal communication during naturally occurring interactions. Gerardine Pereira argues that key topics in pragmatics, such as coherence and cohesion, should be revisited with consideration of the interplay between non-verbal cues (here specifically gestures and gaze) and verbal communication. The data explored are face-to-face interactions and excerpts from the video-recorded interactions. The analysis focuses on the ways in which cohesion and coherence in a communicative event are achieved by both verbal and gesticular repetitions; the synchronicity of verbal and nonverbal communication across larger chunks of discourse is underlined. The study argues for a theory of cohesion and reference meaning,

integrating the co-construction of both meanings of communication, especially through verbal repetition and gesture recurrence, which create connections across discursive events during the interactions. However, nonverbal communication – gesture and gaze – is especially important to express stance, i.e., to signal agreement, disagreement or understanding; eye gaze especially informs of the degree of attention and involvement in the task. This study highlights the importance of combining gesture analysis and linguistic analysis to fully render the complexity of communicative events.

Gunter Senft examines the interface of anthropology and pragmatics, framing his study within Malinowski's concept of "anthropological linguistics", which describes and analyses the functions that situational-intentional varieties of a language fulfil with respect to a community's social construction of reality. The chapter focuses on the use of language in social interactions among the Trobriand Islanders, a community Senft observed during many years of field work (over 30 years). Taking three examples to focus on, greetings, emotions and taboos, Senft shows the strong intersection of the two disciplines, anthropology and pragmatics. On the one hand, anthropology focuses on the role of language in creating *social bonds*, while on the other hand these social bonds are learnt through *communicative events*. Therefore the meaning of an utterance is constituted by its pragmatic function: it can only be understood in relation to the context in which it is embedded (also discussed in earlier chapters of this volume). For this reason, any analysis of the functions of language, culture, and cognition must be undertaken by researchers who know the community's construction of reality and who have built "common ground" with that community – only such a person will be able to fully understand the dynamics between the social bonds and the communicative events.

Michael Haugh and Jonathan Culpeper's chapter, "Integrative pragmatics and (im)politeness theory", combines qualitative and quantitative research to offer an integrative approach that is also pragmatic and discursive. The chapter starts with a brief history of (im)politeness theory development, highlighting the important role of pragmatics at each stage before focusing finally on the recent integrative move between classic pragmatics and discursive approaches to (im)politeness. The authors consider the variation and meta-pragmatic awareness of participants in terms of their interpretation of form-function relationships in particular situated, sequential contexts. They also present a case study that illustrates the usefulness of such an approach – the use of a racial slur on the UK's Big Brother television show, which resulted in the contestant's removal from the show despite his plea that he used the word not as a slur but in a show of "solidarity". The authors argue that the observers'/the audience's understanding

of such usage must be factored in, and therefore the word could be reasonably labelled as impolite or offensive. As mentioned earlier, such an approach combines qualitative and empirical methodologies, which include interactional pragmatics and corpus pragmatics.

Christoph Röhlemann and Brian Clancy, in their chapter “Corpus linguistics and pragmatics”, demonstrate that corpus linguists and pragmaticists can work together to identify commonalities and contribute to the new field of research called “corpus pragmatics”. Indeed, qualitative research such as pragmatics, which is regarded as a “close horizontal reading and interpretation”, and quantitative research such as corpus linguistics, which is described as a vertical reading relying on processing data quantitatively, complement each other in a way that yields interesting results. This integrative meta-methodological approach is illustrated with the example of a study of if-clauses and the use of the indicative *was* or the subjunctive *were* in such clauses, in unscripted television dialogues (the Corpus of Contemporary American English or COCA).

One of the most recent fields in communication studies, internet-mediated communication (IMC), is the topic of chapter eleven, titled “The interface between pragmatics and internet-mediated communication: applications, extensions, and adjustments”, by Francisco Yus. The author begins with a summary of the key issues in the interface between pragmatics and IMC, and explains that the IMC approach uses “classic” means to interpret utterances (with help from contextual cues), whereas communication in the virtual environment occurs in what has been called a “cues-filtered environment” that offers fewer means of contextualization. As such the mediated and virtual nature of IMC implies a new analytical framework, one that must account for this different environment and which must reframe hypotheses, methodologies, and conclusions. To integrate these apparently contradictory dimensions, Yus develops a six-layered methodology within the field of cyber-pragmatics to investigate the relevance of online messages beyond discourse interpretation. The expressions – non-intended non-propositional effects and contextual constraints describing communication – are not relevant from a propositional dimension, but via the internet-mediated communication acquire meaning. Taking into account these parameters would then explain the cognitive mechanisms that lead to (un)successful internet-mediated communication.

The final chapter in this volume, “Pragmatics, humor studies, and the study of interaction”, advocates for greater integration of humor research with pragmatics and vice versa. Nancy Bell begins with a historical overview, recalling how syntactic and semantic perspectives were first applied in humor research; later, conversational analysis, discourse analysis and pragmatics made important contributions

to our understanding of what humor is and how it functions in everyday interactions. However, Bell argues and demonstrates how humour studies have contributed to our understanding of pragmatics and language use. Bell offers numerous examples of the ways in which humor is used to establish, maintain, resist or destroy social relationships.

In conclusion, I believe that the volume is very significant for its exploration of the boundaries, the overlap and the intersectional relationships between pragmatics and some of its adjacent fields. The contributors are not only experts in their fields but they have chosen novel avenues of research, and each chapter is extremely interesting and enlightening. Overall, the book will be a valuable source of knowledge for linguistics researchers as well as graduate students in pragmatics or any of the fields examined here. These scholars will find a knowledgeable overview, whether their investigation is focused on theoretical or methodological issues.

I think it would have been useful to include a final chapter summarizing the extensive discussion of the two concepts of “context” and “contextualization”. Although there are numerous theoretical echoes among the chapters that contribute to the coherence and the value of *Pragmatics and its Interfaces*, a final chapter to wrap up the discussions on a unifying note would have been useful. Such a final chapter could also have briefly addressed the fields that are missing from this overview, including the dynamic and novel fields of intercultural studies and pragmatics, forensics linguistics and pragmatics, as well as applied linguistics and pragmatics.

Fabienne Baider  
University of Cyprus  
fabienne@ucy.ac.cy