2.3 Pragmatic

Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker or writer found in utterances and interpreted by a listener or reader.

Yule (1996: 4) regards pragmatics as the study of relationships between linguistic forms and the users of those forms and pragmatics is the only one allowing human into the analysis because through pragmatics one can talk about people’s intended meanings, their assumptions, their purposes, and the kinds of actions such as requests and apologies when they speak.

As social individuals, people spend much of their time talking or interacting with other people; for example when they are getting together with friends, workmates or families over meal time. These interactions involving utterances can be analyzed by pragmatic analysis to find out the speaker’s intended meanings, the listener’s assumptions or receptions regard with some aspects such as who the speaker and the listener are, what relationship they have, and in what context they are in when they interact. The meaning gained from an utterance may differ from one to another person; it depends on the mentioned aspects. For example, two friends, Maggie and James, are having a conversation which may imply some things and infer some other things without providing any clear linguistic evidence of ‘the meaning’ of what was being communicated.

Maggie : “Coffee?”

James : “It would keep me awake all night”
Maggie has to know that Jamie has to stay up all night to study for an exam to comprehend that James receives her offering.

Here is another example of utterances in conversation which may often be heard, but what the participants mean depend on the shared knowledge laid between the speaker and the listener.

A: “Hey, have you?”

B: “Yap, just this morning.”

The meaning of the words in the example is understood, literally, but not what is communicated by the speaker and the listener. However, both the speaker and the listener seem to understand each other as B answers A’s question without asking what does A mean with “have you?”

The speaker normally expects that his or her communicative intention will be recognized by the hearer. Both speaker and hearer are usually helped in this process by the circumstances surrounding the utterance.

2.3.1 Scope of Pragmatics

Yule (1996: XII) describes the subject areas of pragmatics as follows:

Entailment

Entailment is references that can be drawn only from our knowledge about utterances. Yule (1996: 25) states that entailment is something that logically follows from what is asserted in the utterance. For example:
(1) Mary’s brother has bought three horses.

In producing the utterance (1), the speaker will normally be expected to have the presuppositions that a person called Mary has a brother. The speaker may also hold the more specific presuppositions that Mary has only one brother and that he has a lot of money. In fact, all of these presuppositions are the speaker’s and all of them can be wrong. The sentence in (1) will be treated as having some entailments such as Mary’s brother bought something, Mary’s brother bought three animals, somebody had bought three horses, and other similar logical consequences.

Deixis

Deixis is a process whereby words or expressions rely absolutely on context. It is a technical term from Greek for one of the most basic things we do with utterances which means ‘pointing’ through language. For example:

(6) Jim: “I'll put this here”

(The context is Jim is telling his wife that he is about to put the key of the house in the kitchen drawer)

From sentence (6) it can be seen two deictic expressions – ‘this’ and ‘here’. These deictic expressions are conventionally understood as the expressions of being ‘near speaker’.
Implicature

Yule (1996: 131) states that implicature is a short version of conversational implicature which is defined as an additional unstated meaning in conversation. There is a basic assumption in conversation that each participant (the speaker and the listener) attempt to cooperate to the exchange of talk. People produce implicatures all the time but are mostly unaware of it. For example, if someone asks, “Could you close the door?” the listener does not usually answer “Yes,” instead they perform the non-linguistic act of closing the door. In this case, although the speaker uses a form of words that is conventionally a question; the listener can infer that the speaker is making a request.

Here are two examples of implicature which implicate “I don’t like” and “I’m not going”:

(7)  
A: “Do you like the color?”
B: “Red is red.”

(The context is - A and B are close friends and A knows well that B does not like red color)

Stating that “Red is red” in (7) is apparently both too informative (since people already know that red is red) and not informative enough because B does not directly answer the question of A. There may be some interpretations gained by anyone when hearing B’s answer, but since the context is A knows that B really does not like red, then B has given the answer of the question. Thus, A understands that B does not like the color.
they are talking about. B does not say that she/he does not like the color but she/he implies it.

For another example:

(8) A: “We’re going to the movie, are you going with us tonight?"

B: “My parents’ are visiting tonight.”

(The context is that A and B are good friends and A knows that B rarely meets her/his parents who live out of the town.)

In (8), B’s answer is not related with the question of A, because there is not any relationship between the movie and B’s parents. However, since there is a shared knowledge between A and B, then B has actually answered A’s question. A knows that B seldom meets her parents living out of the town, so A must understand that B is not going with A because B must want to spend the night with her/his parents. B does not say that she is not going to the movie with the other, but she implies it.

**Presupposition**

Yule (1996: 133) states that presupposition is something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance. Speakers, not sentences, have presuppositions. For example:

(9) *Where has Anne looked for the keys?*
Presupposition of (9): Anne has looked for the keys, but has not found it yet.

(10) *Do you want to do it again?*

Presupposition of (10): You have done it already, at least one time.

(11) *My wife is pregnant*

Presupposition of (11): The speaker has a wife.

### 2.4 The Theory of Humor

In daily conversation people in expressing intentions and ideas to their partner are sometimes put humor in it, to reduce the tensions that exist around them.

Humor as a condition or sign that can cause laugh is a common part in everyday life. Humor can be found everywhere, and it does not regard any social class, educational background and level of human intelligence. Humor exists in all class of society, in villages or cities. Humor is conducted by individuals or groups to utter their feelings of distress and aims to reduce the tensions that exist around them.

Different people will not necessarily find the same things equally funny. The ability to enjoy humor is universal.

Ross (1998: 1) says, “One definition of humour is: something that makes a person laugh or smile.”
Ross (1998: 2) says, “Humor has various effects, whether these are intentional or not. It is simplistic to say that it’s just for a laugh. It’s possible to laugh and admit that, in a sense, it’s not funny.”

There is also an important distinction between the sense and force of an utterance. ‘You make great coffee’, taken in isolation, can be seen as imparting some information. This is its ‘sense’. In context it can be used to convey a variety of messages – its ‘force’ is different in each case.

1. Do I make good coffee? You make great coffee.
2. Do you think I’m a good cook? You make great coffee.
3. It’s your turn to make the coffee. You make great coffee.

There are possibilities for ambiguity of meaning when there is a gap between the sense and force of the utterance. Misunderstanding or misinterpretations happen when a person concentrates on the structural form of the utterance, rather than being aware that it can have various functions.

Ross (1998: 8) says that the humor will often have the following elements:

- There is a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in the joke.
- The conflict is caused by an ambiguity at some level of language.
- The punch line is surprising, as it is not the expected interpretation, but it resolves the conflict: ‘Have you got a light, Mac?’ ‘No, but I’ve got a dark brown overcoat.’