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## A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PRAGMATICS: LANGUAGE IN CONTEXT

Submission Date: March 10, 2024, Accepted Date: March 15, 2024,

Published Date: March 20, 2024

Crossref doi: <https://doi.org/10.37547/ajps/Volume04Issue03-05>

**Khajieva Feruza**

Doctor of Science in Philological Sciences, Associate Professor, Department of English Literary and Translation Studies, Foreign Languages Faculty, Bukhara State University, Uzbekistan

### ABSTRACT

This article delves into the realm of pragmatics, a branch of linguistics focused on the relationship between language and context, and its significance in literary analysis through speech act theory. It outlines the foundational aspects of pragmatics, drawing on the contributions of scholars such as E.S. Aznaurova and J.K. Adams, who stress the role of context and communicative conditions in language interpretation. The historical origins of pragmatic study are traced back to ancient rhetoric, highlighting early considerations of effective communication. Central to the discussion is speech act theory, introduced by J.L. Austin and expanded by John Searle, which differentiates between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts in language. This theoretical framework is applied to literature, illustrating how speech acts within narratives extend beyond conveying information to actively shaping the story and influencing reader engagement. The article argues for the importance of pragmatics in providing a richer comprehension of literary texts, positioning language as a dynamic force in the construction of meaning and social interaction within narratives.

### KEYWORDS

Pragmatics, speech acts, locution, illocution, perlocution.

### INTRODUCTION

Understanding Pragmatics. Theoretical overview.

Pragmatics, as a nuanced branch of linguistics, navigates scholarly the complex interplay between language and context, scrutinizing the profound ways in which the broader socio-cultural tapestry and immediate contextual cues mold the interpretation of language. Positioned at the crossroads of syntax and semantics, it delves into the intricate dance of non-verbal cues, cultural norms, and shared expectations, transcending the conventional confines of linguistic study.

E.S. Aznaurova characterizes the pragmatics of a literary text within the realm of linguopragmatics, which is a facet of language research that explores language units in their connection to the individuals employing the language. In linguopragmatic inquiries, the central focus lies on both the act of speaking or writing (involving the speaker, the text's creator, and the addresser) and the act of listening or reading (involving the recipient and the addressee).

“Any kind of intercourse, including intercourse by means of a belles-lettres text, presupposes a certain communicative-pragmatic situation. A pragmatic situation is a complex of external conditions of intercourse which the speakers keep in mind at the moment of realizing their speech act: who?-to whom?-about what?-for what?-how?

We distinguish the following parameters of a communicative-pragmatic situation:

1. Environment and place of a communicative act.
2. The subject of communication.
3. The purpose of communication.
4. The social status of the participants of communication (their class social, ideological characteristics); educational qualifications, background knowledge, race affinity etc.
5. Individual psychological characteristics of the communicants (sex, age, national affinity, temperament etc.)” [1, 48-49]

J.K. Adam's theory of pragmatics is based on the further development of semantics of language. He asserts that pragmatics in linguistics is challenging, requiring exclusion of semantic aspects.

“The field of linguistics places a special burden on attempts to define pragmatics, for the definition must not only encompass everything within pragmatics, it must also exclude everything within semantics. The development of linguistics in this century has progressed by jumping from one level of language to another: from phonology to syntax, from syntax to semantics, and from semantics to pragmatics. This progression suggests that these linguistic levels are rigid and should be clearly defined, so that ever since the jump to pragmatics, considerable effort has been made to distinguish it from semantics.” [2, 1]

Both Adams and Aznaurova emphasize the importance of pragmatics in linguistic analysis, particularly in relation to language users and their communication. Adams discusses the distinction between semantics and pragmatics, with a focus on the importance of considering “the users of a language.” Aznaurova highlights linguopragmatics as the aspect of language research that studies units in relation to the individuals using the language, including both speakers/writers and listeners/readers. Aznaurova introduces the concept of a communicative-pragmatic situation, emphasizing the external conditions of intercourse, including who is involved, the subject, purpose, social status, and individual characteristics. Adams, in discussing the distinction between semantics and pragmatics, implies that pragmatics involves understanding the context and conditions of communication. Both definitions suggest that pragmatics involves understanding contextual information and indicates which signs of the language system are appropriate in specific communication conditions.

Adams suggests that a pragmatic description of fiction should be based on categories developed within the philosophy of language, including utterance, language users, and context. Aznaurova’s definition incorporates elements related to philosophy of language by considering the nature of communication and the parameters influencing it. Both Adams and

Aznaurova view pragmatics as an essential aspect of language research, involving the study of language units in relation to language users and their communication contexts. They emphasize the dynamic and contextual nature of linguistic interactions. Concerned fundamentally with meaning in the context of language use, pragmatics illuminates the gaps between speaker meaning and sentence meaning, unraveling the intricacies inherent in communication.

Pragmatic theories, woven into the fabric of this exploration, offer explanations for such phenomena, portraying communication as a process of rational and reasoned interpretation. This process draws not only on linguistic structures but also on shared and world knowledge, cultural norms, and individual components of specific interactional contexts, thereby enriching our understanding of the multifaceted nature of linguistic expression within the broader scope of human interaction and interpretation. Let’s look into the history of pragmatic investigation of language. The first scholars to think about pragmatic aspects of speech were the Greeks. While the formal field of pragmatics as we understand it today did not exist in ancient rhetoric schools, there were certainly discussions and teachings that touched upon pragmatic aspects of communication. In ancient rhetoric, the focus was primarily on persuasive and effective communication. Scholars and rhetoricians in ancient Greece, such as Aristotle, Plato, and others,

explored various aspects of language use, argumentation, and persuasion.

For example, Aristotle’s work “Rhetoric” delves into the art of persuasion, exploring the means of effective communication and the use of language to influence an audience. While not explicitly framed in modern pragmatic terms, many principles discussed in ancient rhetoric are related to pragmatic aspects, such as the importance of understanding one’s audience, adapting speech to different situations, and considering the context of communication.

In essence, ancient rhetoric schools were concerned with practical and effective communication, addressing aspects that align with the modern understanding of pragmatics, even though the formal field of pragmatics as a branch of linguistics emerged much later.

### Exploration of Speech Acts Theory

In the second half of the twentieth century, modern theories related to the pragmatic understanding of information emerged. The development of these theories was notably influenced by the speech act theory, which offers a framework within pragmatics for analyzing intentional acts carried out through language. Originating with philosopher J.L. Austin in “How to do Things with Words” (1962) [3] and later expanded by John Searle in “Speech Acts: An Essay in

the Philosophy of Language” (1969) [4], speech act theory is a branch of the philosophy of language. It delves into the ways in which speech can perform actions, surpassing the conventional view of language as a mere tool for information conveyance. Instead, it explores how utterances can have performative functions, actively shaping social reality through language.

Key components of speech act theory include:

1. Locutionary Act: This is the basic act of producing a meaningful linguistic expression with a certain grammatical structure. It involves the production of words and sentences that carry meaning.
2. Illocutionary Act: This represents the speaker’s intention in making a statement. It is the intended or implied force behind the utterance, such as making a request, giving an order, asking a question, making a promise, etc.
3. Perlocutionary Act: This refers to the effect or impact an utterance has on the listener or the audience. It is the response or reaction elicited by the speaker’s words. The perlocutionary act is concerned with the consequences or effects of speech acts.

Let’s break down the sentence “The sun is shining brightly today” into all three speech acts:

	Locutionary Act:	Illocutionary Act:	Perlocutionary Act:
Explanation	This is the basic act of producing a meaningful linguistic expression with a certain grammatical structure.	This represents the speaker’s intention in making a statement. It is the intended or implied force behind the utterance.	This refers to the effect or impact an utterance has on the listener or the audience.
Example	In this case, the locutionary act involves uttering the words “The sun is shining brightly today,” forming a grammatically correct and meaningful sentence.	The illocutionary act here could be a statement of fact, indicating that the sun is indeed shining brightly. It might also convey a sense of appreciation for the weather.	The perlocutionary act might include the listener feeling a sense of warmth and positivity upon hearing the statement. It could evoke a mood of cheerfulness or prompt someone to look outside to enjoy the bright sunlight.

Speech act theory is significant in understanding how language is used not only to convey information but also to perform actions and bring about social effects. It emphasizes that the meaning of an utterance is not solely in the words used (locutionary act) but also in the speaker’s intention (illocutionary act) and the impact on the listener (perlocutionary act).

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the exploration of pragmatic aspects in literary texts, guided by speech act theory, reveals the intricate dance of meaning, intention, and response within the realm of language. The theoretical foundation of pragmatics, as discussed by scholars like E.S. Aznaurova and J.K.Adams, underscores the importance of considering language in its dynamic relationship with users and contextual parameters.

In the broader context, the evolution of pragmatic investigation traces back to ancient rhetoric schools, where pragmatic aspects of communication were explored, laying the foundation for modern theories. The emergence of speech act theory in the mid-twentieth century marked a pivotal moment, providing a framework to understand language as a performative force that goes beyond information conveyance.

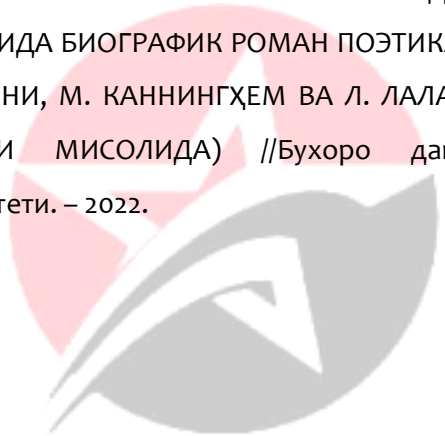
In essence, pragmatic analysis, intertwined with speech act theory, enriches our comprehension of language in literary texts. By acknowledging the performative nature of language, considering contextual parameters, and deciphering the intended and unintended consequences of speech acts, we unravel the tapestry of meaning woven into the fabric of literary expression.

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