

Diana Hornoiu. 2021. *Understanding Pragmatics: From Theory to Practice*. Constanța: Ovidius University Press. 207 pp. + xiii

Reviewed by Costin-Valentin Oancea*

Diana Hornoiu's book *Understanding Pragmatics: From Theory to Practice* is included in the book series 'Studies in Linguistics', published by Ovidius University Press. The book consists of eight chapters, followed by appendices and references.

Chapter 1, "Defining pragmatics" (pp. 1-12), starts by briefly presenting the history of pragmatics (conferences, volumes, journals). The need for pragmatics is also succinctly discussed, as well as the relation between pragmatics and syntax/semantics. The last part of the chapter tackles different approaches to pragmatics (i.e. linguistic-philosophical pragmatics, sociocultural-interactional pragmatics and intercultural pragmatics).

As the title indicates, Chapter 2, "Reference, deixis and anaphora" (pp. 13-28), focuses on the concept of deixis, deictic reference and different types of deixis (person deixis, time deixis, place deixis, discourse deixis, social deixis). The author then swiftly moves to deictic and non-deictic usages. The chapter ends with a discussion of anaphora and cataphora.

Chapter 3, "Presupposition" (pp. 29-47) opens with a brief discussion regarding the phenomenon of presupposition as first raised by Frege in 1892. Different types of presupposition are presented and exemplified.

In Chapter 4, "Context, implicature and cognition" (pp. 48-86), Grice's theory of conversational implicature is presented at length. Grice's famous maxims of conversation that govern rational change and bridge the gap between what is said and what is meant are discussed and commented upon. The author also tackles generalized and particularized conversational implicatures, based on the distinction originally drawn by Grice. The last part of the chapter focuses on Neo-Gricean theories of implicature.

Chapter 5, "Language as action: Speech acts" (pp. 87-103) presents Austin's (1962) theory of speech acts. According to Austin, certain types of sentences are designed to do something, instead of just saying something which can be deemed as either true or false. He labels these sentences "performatives", in contrast to what he calls "constatives". Also included here is a discussion of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, meaning what is said, what is done and the effect. Searle's taxonomy of speech acts is also highlighted as well as indirect speech acts.

"Relevance Theory" constitutes the topic of Chapter 6 (pp. 104-119). According to Sperber & Wilson's (1986a, 1986b) Relevance theory, in a given context, the decoded meaning of the sentence is compatible with a number of different interpretations. They also mention that for a piece of information to be deemed relevant, it has to produce some effect on the addressee's cognitive environment. In Sperber & Wilson's (1986a: 158) own words, the principle of relevance is defined as follows: "every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance." Also included here is a brief overview of the key principles of Relevance Theory.

Chapter 7, "Politeness Phenomena" (pp. 120-153) is devoted to the concept of politeness, as put forward by Brown & Levinson (1978, 1987). Brown & Levinson's proposal has as central tenet the concept of "face", defined as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (1987: 61). Face has two sides: "positive face", which is the desire to be approved of and "negative face", seen as the desire to be unimpeded in one's actions. The chapter is strewn

* Ovidius University of Constanta, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures and Communication Sciences, oancea_costin@yahoo.com.

with relevant examples that illustrate positive face and negative face, which are meticulously analysed and accounted for.

The last chapter, "Conversation Analysis" (pp. 154-187), delves into conversation analysis, an approach to discourse which is derived from ethnomethodology. The author starts by drawing a distinction between "conversation" and "conversational analysis". The former refers to a line of linguistic inquiry which is also known as ethnomethodological conversation analysis, associated with the works of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson and Pomerantz (1978), among others. The latter aims at describing the conversational uses of language and has as proponents authors like Gumperz, Tannen and Schiffrin. The next section is addressed to turn-taking organization and the local management system. This chapter also draws on naturally-occurring Romanian conversations, part of the Constanța corpus which the author collected throughout the years.

Diana Horoiu's book, *Understanding Pragmatics: From Theory to Practice* is a useful tool for anyone interested in the fascinating domain of pragmatics. The chapters on Relevance Theory and Politeness Phenomena, usually missing from other introductory textbook to pragmatics, add value to the book. The interesting examples from Romanian, part of the Constanța corpus, together with the instructions provided in Appendices 1 and 2 regarding transcription procedures represent a big plus. Also worth mentioning is the fact that each chapter is followed by a "Checking understanding" section which contains exercises designed to reinforce the concepts tackled in the aforementioned chapter and a "Further Reading" section for the readers interested in finding out more about a particular topic. All in all, the book under review represents a valuable addition to the exciting domain of pragmatics in general and English and Romanian pragmatics, in particular. For achieving this, the author deserves ample credit and congratulations.

References

- Austin, J. L. 1962. *How to Do Things with Words*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, P. & Levinson, S. 1978. Universals in language use: Politeness phenomena. In N. E. Goody (ed.), *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction*, 56-310. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, P. & Levinson, S. 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sperber, D. & Wilson, D. 1986a. *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sperber, D. & Wilson, D. 1986b. On defining relevance. In R. Grandy & R. Warner (eds.), *Philosophical Grounds of Rationality: Intentions, Categories, Ends*, 143-158. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pomerantz, A. 1978. Compliment responses: Notes on cooperation of multiple constraints. In J. Schenkein (ed.), *Studies in the Organization of Conversational Interaction*, 79-112. New York: Academic Press.