

Current Trends in Intercultural, Cognitive and Social Pragmatics

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Current Trends in Intercultural, Cognitive and Social Pragmatics provides the reader with a representative spectrum of the state of the art in three related areas of pragmatic research: intercultural, cognitive, and social. It brings together a selection of papers that were presented at the first symposium of EPICS, acronym for *Encuentros de Pragmática Intercultural, Cognitiva y Social*, held during April 10th-12th, 2002 at the University of Seville. These theoretical and empirical contributions address interesting issues within the area of human communication, which is mirrored in the alliance of intercultural, cognitive and social approaches, treated as complementary. The book's encompassing approach constitutes a valuable contribution to the field of pragmatics in general and an essential reference to those researching both Spanish and English at the intercultural, cognitive and social pragmatic levels.

The structure of the book is clear and comprehensive. It consists of an introduction and 18 papers. After an introduction and an initial paper on a traditional topic in pragmatics, namely, 'discourse markers', the book is divided into three sections which correspond roughly to the three areas of the Symposium. In the "Introduction" (pp. 7-11), Pilar Garcés Conejos, Reyes Gómez Morón, Lucía Fernández Amaya and Manuel Padilla Cruz present intercultural, cognitive and social pragmatics as theoretical basis of EPICS and introduce the reader to the main ideas and outline of the various papers contained in the book. The collection of papers starts with Bruce Fraser's "An Account of Discourse Markers" (pp. 13-34) where he sketches out his linguistic (i.e. syntactic, semantic and pragmatic) account of DMs based on data from English.

Part I: Intercultural Pragmatics

Stefan Schneider's paper on the "Pragmatic Functions of Spanish Parenthetical Verbs" (pp. 37-52) examines parenthetical verbs in a corpora of contemporary

spoken Spanish and classifies them pragmatically and functionally, showing that only few performative verbs actually occur as parentheticals (e.g. *decir* 'say').

The following two papers are closely related, as they both analyse different aspects of the performance of non-native speakers of English. The first paper, "Greek Non-Native Speakers' Requests and Degree of Directness" (pp. 53-66) by Maria Economidou-Kogetsidis, examines the requestive production of Greek non-native speakers of English and their degree of directness. Using a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) she compares their performance to that of British English native speakers and finds out that in situations that are representative of both the Greek and the British culture Greek non-native speakers employ more direct requestive strategies than British English native speakers. The author suggests that this could be the cause behind pragmatic failure when transferring Greek requests into English. The second paper, "El uso de marcadores de respuesta fática por hablantes no nativos de inglés" ("The Use of Phatic Markers by Non-Native Speakers of English") (pp. 67-81) by Ángela Iglesias, presents part of a research work about the use of Discourse Markers (DM) by Spanish students of English in 15 interactions with native speakers. The author analyses phatic markers within the frame of Interlanguage Pragmatics, arguing that they are strategies of positive courtesy and coherent discursive elements that carry out interactive functions.

The next three papers also address similar topics, for they tackle the use of different communicative strategies in two kinds of discourse settings. Inmaculada Fortanet Gómez examines in "Enhancing the Speaker-Audience Relationship in Academic Lectures" (pp. 83-93) the various devices purposefully used by the lecturers in British universities in order to establish rapport with the audience. Using a corpus of 10 transcribed lectures on Law, video-recorded in a British university, she finds that there are two main ways in which the teacher approached the students seeking collaboration: the direct approach (e.g. the use of the personal pronouns 'you' and 'we', questions and answers, addressing students by their name and the use of asides) and the indirect one (e.g. the presupposition of shared knowledge, and geographical references). The paper on "Delivery Strategies in Classroom Lectures: Organising the Message" (pp. 97-114), which is also based on a corpus of 30 classroom lectures on three different areas: Business, Law and Sociology, focuses on the way lecturers design and implement different ways to connect information to aspects already observed in previous classes, introducing both the topic and the framework of the

speech. Juan Carlos Palmer Silveira pays attention to different linguistic devices, such as pronominalisation, verb usage, rhetorical questions, time-related expressions, clarifying asides and other aspects. Finally, in “Discourse in Prison Setting” (pp. 115-130) Roman Kalisz and Wojciech Kubiński describe the communicative strategies developed by inmates in the jails of Communist Poland of the mid eighties. Their study reveals that in spite of the limitations of communication channels and circumstances in which communication takes place, inmates develop various specialised codes and methods used to convey information and also an intricate prison jargon and instances of “self-detachment” used to dissociate themselves from their humiliating circumstances.

Part II: Cognitive Pragmatics

The paper “Misinterpreting Word Problems. Children’s Interpretation of “More” in Arithmetic World Problems” (pp. 133-145) examines the problems young students face in word problem when they have to master both linguistic and mathematical skills. The author observes that when children do not understand the phrasing of a comparison question, they fail to construct an episodic situation conception that would allow them to solve the problem. This study suggests that in the process of learning the mathematical register of arithmetic, children create for different word problems an interpretation of “more” that is equivalent to that of “have.”

Following Gricean theory, in “Las implicaturas conversacionales en obras de teatro anglosajón contemporáneas y sus traducciones” (“Conversational Implicatures in Contemporary Anglosaxon plays and their Translation into Spanish”) (pp. 147-164) Alicia Hernández Cristóbal analyses the way the implicatures in three contemporary plays have been translated into their corresponding Spanish versions and how the translation has affected them. The author finds out that, in general, literal translations are the ones that better preserve implicatures in the Spanish versions.

The next three papers adopt a Relevance Theoretic perspective, “Visual and Linguistic Interplay in Front-page Layout of *El País*; the Events of the 11th September” (pp. 165-179) deals with the front page-layout of *El País* from 11th to 25th September 2001. Its author, Loreta Paulauskaite, finds out that the front page-layout of the Spanish paper changed after the 11th September 2001, therefore proving that its layout is more flexible than the idealised model proposed by Kress

and Leeuwen in 1999. The author thinks that one of the reasons for this change was the desire of the newspaper to use different types of layouts in accordance to the hardness of the news, thus transmitting information in a way that complies with the Principle of Relevance. Eva Delgado Lavin proposes in “A Procedural Analysis of *Even*” (pp. 181-197) a procedural account of the linguistic semantics of *even*, according to which *even* contributes to the relevance of the utterances in which it occurs by lessening the cognitive effort the hearer will have to invest when processing them, as *even* specifies the context for their interpretations and points to the contextual effects the reader may obtain. Her analysis can answer questions about the interpretation of complex cases, such as *even*-if conditionals, and how it can throw light on general thorny issues like the quantificational force of *even* utterances. Finally, Manuel Cruz Padilla’s paper, “On the Social Importance of Phatic Utterances: Some Considerations for a Relevance Theoretic Approach” (pp. 199-216), offers some guidelines to improve the extant Relevance Theoretic approach to phatic communication, arguing that interlocutors’ cultural knowledge about the usage of phatic utterances in social interaction may contribute drastically to the generation of very firm and specific expectations of relevance in the hearer about the way in which the speaker aims at achieving an optimal level of relevance with these utterances.

Part III. Social Pragmatics

In “He Goes and I’m Like: The New Quotations Revisited” (pp. 219-239) Isabelle Buchstaller examines the polyfunctionality of the new quotatives, ‘like’ and ‘go’. On the basis of Lakoff’s (1987) radial structure model she proposes an alternative semantic core model for ‘like’. She also shows that a radial structure model can also explain the *status quo* of ‘go’s’ functions and illustrates the fact that both ‘like’ and ‘go’ are synchronically used as quotative items. She argues that they are both heavily used for the expression of habitual talk and that ‘go’ has a bigger affiliation with higher probability levels. In her view, the best way to represent the various function of ‘like’ and ‘go’ is with reference to a radial structure model and a hypothetically continuum.

The next two papers are related since they focus on issues regarding politeness. On the one hand, in “Escolio de las escalas de variación transcultural de Spencer-Oatey desde ejemplos tomados de la prensa británica” (“Comments on Spencer-Oatey’s Cross-Cultural Variation Scales from Examples Taken from British Press”) (pp. 241-254) J. A. G. Ardila applies Spencer Oatey’s crosscultural scales to a corpus of letters

from *The Daily Telegraph* and interviews of customers at a local pub. She concludes that Spencer-Oatey's proposal may be extremely useful for future contrastive research on politeness studies between distant and less distant languages. On the other hand, "Las estrategias de cortesía en la secuencia de cierre de la conversación telefónica en inglés y español" ("Politeness Strategies in the Closing Section of Telephone Conversations in English and Spanish") (pp. 255-265) by Lucía Fernández Amaya summarises the conclusions obtained after analysing linguistic politeness in a comparative study of the closing sections of 23 telephone conversations in American English and 23 in Peninsular Spanish. She observes that positive face predominates in both corpora, that there is also more negative face in the English corpus and that Spanish participants use more various substrategies to show solidarity and closeness.

The last two papers tackle social aspects of media discourse. In "Gatekeepers in Media Discourse: Power, Social Distance and Size of Imposition in TV Interviews" (pp. 267-280) Reyes Gómez Morón defends the idea that pragmatic parameters such as Power, Distance and Social Imposition are not constant but dynamic in media discourse. She analyses five interviews from the *CNN*, arguing that sometimes it is the interviewee and not the interviewer or the audience the one who becomes the gatekeeper of the interaction. Finally, in "Globalisation in Economy Advertising: an Analysis of Text and Image in Ads from *Actualidad Económica*" (pp. 281-296) D. Bazdar and B. Narbona Reina analyse the phenomenon of globalisation in the advertisements of *Actualidad Económica*. They identify the strategies used in the images, design and language of the ads in four different issues of that magazine to see if they can be considered as part of a global strategy oriented to attract worldwide consumers or only focusing Spanish consumers. They conclude that the ads under study follow global standards of advertising.

In general this collection is worthy addition to the recent trend of "Intercultural, Cognitive and Social Pragmatics" in the field of Pragmatics. The content of major topics is well represented by diverse data, analysis and information that vary according to depth and approach. To my mind, *Current Trends in Intercultural, Cognitive and Social Pragmatics* can by all means be seen as a successful first step in the direction of the aimed objectives: "providing new insights to existing approaches or (...) suggesting new lines of research to pursue" (p. 11), as it reads in the introduction of the book. I think that the next issues of EPICS have some desiderata to meet of which some may be extended to the whole field of pragmatics. But, all in all, this first

issue can serve as a sort of introduction into the field for both readers with and without knowledge in Intercultural, Cognitive and Social Pragmatics, although parallel readings would also be advisable. Probably, the only tangible limitation of this volume lies in some typographical errors, which could have been easily avoided with little more attention. Yet, this is a minor fault and what we should definitely remember about the book is that it offers an interesting insight into recent trends and topics in present pragmatics.

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