

## 言語学

(1) あなたが知っている言語を一つ選び、その言語と日本語が文法的に似ている点を、具体例をあげて示しなさい。

(2) 以下の文章を読んで、pragmatics (語用論) とは、言語のどのような現象を研究対象とするものかを簡単にまとめなさい。

No matter how natural our language facilities or how convention-bound their use, as language users, we always operate in contexts. Therefore, the context looms large, and has to be taken into account whenever we formulate our thoughts about language.

There is a built-in contradiction between the conventionalized and more or less rigid forms that the language puts at our disposal, and the spontaneous, individual expression of our thoughts that we all strive to realize. This is true not only of the more technical rules of the grammar (especially those governing the inflection of words and the structure of sentences), but also of what is usually discussed under the general heading of ‘meaning represented in propositions’. As the Danish linguist Johan Nicolai Madvig expressed it one and a half centuries ago, “Humans want to speak, not just name isolated representations. Language begins with the sentence”. In other words, humans are made for ‘speaking’ (that is, communicating in spoken sentences or utterances), rather than for carrying on abstract discourses about the meaning of things, in “isolated representations”.

Meaning can be natural, as expressed in the old Scholastic saying *Urina est signum sanitatis* (‘Urine is a sign of health’); that is, from a person’s urine it is possible to conclude about the person’s health; and this conclusion is immediate, natural and, in most cases, non-controversial.

In contrast to such a natural sign, language is *conventional*: that is, there is no immediate, natural connection between a word and what it expresses. If we had to rely exclusively on ‘natural signs’, our communication would be rendered extremely restricted and difficult, if not impossible and indeed paradoxical, as we will see.

The *general* paradox of language is that it is natural only inasmuch the desire to communicate, and the need to express themselves, are natural for all humans. But we cannot ‘read off’ this ‘speaker meaning’ of an utterance in the same way, and as directly, as a physician is able to interpret the ‘natural meaning’ of the color and

other significant properties of a person's urine.

In contrast, linguistic meaning (also called 'sentence meaning') is purely conventional (or 'non-natural'), inasmuch as it operates only within the rules of the grammar and the context of a given society. Acquiring the linguistic and social communicative conventions is a task that language users acquire gradually, and many of them only imperfectly. The *specific* paradox of pragmatics is, then, that language users must employ socially conventional, linguistic means to express their individual intentions. The invisible workings of their minds cannot be immediately expressed, in a natural way, but must be coded in non-natural, conventional and contextual, carriers.

The paradox of conventionality vs. spontaneity is undone by the fact that the mediating carriers (the 'media', one might say, in the proper sense of the word) are conventionalized through human use. In fact, we get so used to the medium of language that it becomes our second nature. Speech becomes so natural to us that in order to characterize our language in contrast to 'artificial' (logical or computer) language, we use the adjective 'natural' — despite the fact that, strictly speaking, all languages have been developed among users and for users, as social artifacts. There strictly are no such things as 'natural' languages.

This leads us to an important conclusion as regards pragmatics. Since language is developed in a social context, its use is governed by society rather than by the individual speakers. Language users do not decide, on the spur of the moment, which medium to choose in order to get their ideas or feelings across; they use the artificial signs that natural language provides them with, given the affordances of their actual, historical context. The context determines both what one can say and what one cannot say: only the pragmatics of the situation can give meaning to one's words.

Thus, one and the same utterance can obtain completely different, even diametrically opposed effects, depending on convention and context. Well-known phenomena such as irony, sarcasm, metaphor, hyperbole and so on show us the richness and diversity of the life behind the linguistic scene, as compared to what transpires on stage through the official roles and costumes. For instance, if I say 'Great!' to the airline agent who just has told me that — due to double booking — I cannot get a seat on my plane, and will have to spend the night in the airport, I am using this 'sentence meaning' in a quite novel way to express my 'speaker meaning': what I'm really saying is something like "This is the worst thing that could happen to me right now".

However, this is not tantamount to a linguistic variant of 'anything goes'. Even if

linguistic forms, by themselves, do not limit, or exhaust, the uses a speaker may make of them, they are still among the most important elements of human communication, and have to be respected as such. But how do we go about recognizing what Levinson has called the “full communicative intention” of a speaker? Levinson answers his own question as follows: “By taking into account not only the meaning of an utterance U, but also the precise mechanisms such as irony etc. which may cause a divergence between the meaning of U and what is communicated by the utterance of U in a *particular context*”.

The following conversation offers some striking examples of the context’s importance in understanding utterances:

*(A and B are on the telephone, talking over arrangements for the next couple of days).*

A: So can you please come over here again right now.

B: Well, I have to go to Edinburgh today sir.

A: Hmm. How about this Thursday?

It does not take us long to realize how many presuppositions, implicatures, references and other factual and contextual conditions have to be drawn upon in this exchange in order for it to make sense. All of this cannot be accounted for by semantics or syntax, let alone by reference to ‘bare facts’. For instance, the time of the conversation (‘today’) is understood as being different from ‘this Thursday’ (time reference), but not only that: ‘this Thursday’ only makes sense if uttered on a day between ‘last Thursday’ and the Tuesday preceding ‘this Thursday’ — otherwise the speaker would probably have said ‘tomorrow’ or ‘the day after tomorrow’ (conversational implicature). Further, the place from which A is speaking is obviously not Edinburgh, but neither is it a place that is too far removed from either Edinburgh or the speaker’s location (presupposition). In addition, A (being addressed as ‘sir’) seems to be in a position that allows him to give orders to B (presupposition and implicature). And so on. All these facts are dealt with not as ‘bare facts’, on their face value, but as elements forming part of a context that they pragmatically determine and presuppose, and which reflect our ability to compute out of utterances in sequence the contextual assumptions they imply: the spatial, temporal and social relationships between participants, and their requisite beliefs and intentions in undertaking certain verbal exchanges.

( Jacob L. Mey, *Pragmatics. An Introduction* による )