

PRAGMATIK, ANALISIS WACANA, dan GURU BAHASA

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Foreword

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This book provides a welcome framework for teaching the introductory linguistics course to advanced students in Indonesia. What is new is the way it makes use of principles of pragmatics and discourse analysis to integrate the chapters. Many other linguistics textbooks are dominated by the analysis of sentences taken out of context, and if discourse analysis is included at all, it is presented as a new topic. In contrast, Professor Diem's approach attempts to *integrate* the levels of analysis in linguistics. This objective is especially important for the author's target audience, namely, Indonesian undergraduate and graduate students whose aim is to become language teachers of bahasa Indonesia or English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

The author contends that:

“Understanding the concept of pragmatics and discourses with their features and principles will greatly help speakers and writers in that what they express orally and in writing can be understood well by the listeners and readers, respectively.”

An interesting assumption he makes is that in the analysis of natural language,

“Pragmatic analysis and discourse analysis are two-in-one, meaning that they cannot be separated from one another, ... but they are at the same time overlapping in some ways. ... Some features that exist in pragmatics also occur in discourses: e.g., ellipsis and substitution, implicit meaning, politeness, pronoun references, etc.

The assumptions behind the author's claims are very timely. There was a time when linguistics courses influenced by American structuralists Leonard Bloomfield (1933) and Charles Hockett (1958) were mostly concerned about phonology and morphology. Matters changed after Chomsky's (1957) revolution, when syntax chapters were added; but at the same time morphology was eliminated because the structure of words was subsumed under phonology or syntax. Entirely absent were chapters on semantics, pragmatics and discourse analysis.

More recently the field has changed, and textbooks have responded by adding a chapter on discourse analysis, along with much else. Historical linguistics now enjoys a place at the table.

Morphology has been reconstituted after Chomsky's (1970) *lexicalist hypothesis* was fleshed out by Jackendoff (1975), Aronoff (1976), and Anderson (1992). Further chapters were added in response to discoveries in semantics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis by Jackendoff (1972, 1990, 1997), Hymes (1974), Givon (1979) and many others. Finally, in response to student interest in psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, language acquisition, and language teaching, further chapters were needed, sometimes even including a chapter on computational linguistics. As consequence, today comprehensive, single-authored textbooks in linguistics are rare. *Contemporary Linguistics* (5th Edition) is typical: it runs to 755 pages and has four co-authors: William O'Grady (syntax, language processing), John Archibald (phonology, language acquisition), Mark Aronoff (morphology), and Janie Rees-Miller (TESOL, applied linguistics). All those new chapters can of course be viewed as improvement over older approaches, but they also cause problems, of which I shall mention just two. First, while textbooks have expanded in size and scope, the time available to teach the basic linguistics course has not. Second, the added material has not always been properly integrated. Professor Diem's book addresses both problems. By *integrating* the teaching and learning of grammar, pragmatics, and discourse, the introductory linguistics can be made shorter than would be possible otherwise.

Professor Diem's book is based on the general assumption that the best way to teach linguistics is to use authentic samples of speech or writing as models of the ways native speakers communicate with each other in natural settings. It for this reason that the author:

... present(s) many authentic examples of expressions that were directly encountered during his fifteen week visit to Ohio University, Athens, in the fall of 2010. For example, he notated from memory numerous conversations with American native speakers on the bus, in the library, at formal meetings, and in faculty offices; further, he collected newspaper articles from Athens and other sources. Finally, he has collected samples from Ohio Newspapers. Some examples are also taken from other sources and from his own experience in learning and teaching. Most examples of expressions containing pragmatic notions are in English which are intentionally presented to help students and teachers of English as the main target audience of this book in their learning and teaching. This is the feature that might make this book different from others.

One problem that Professor Diem does not address is that of Vocabulary learning. However, in the spirit of his book, we can suggest the integration of vocabulary learning within his general approach. When this is done, a common problem for language learners will surely stand out, namely, what George Miller (1996) has called *the polysemy problem*. Common vocabulary items have multiple meanings which cause theoretical problems for machine translation and computational models in general. It also creates problems for language learners. For example the English verb *drive* has several meanings: a person can *drive a car*, *drive a nail*, or *drive a golf ball*. They all mean something like "cause X to move to Y by means of an instrument", but the exact meanings are slightly different, and each must be learned separately. And *drive* can also be used as a noun in the sentence *That was a nice drive!* which could refer to *a nice drive in the car* (because the scenery was beautiful) or to *a nice drive with the golf club* (because the ball traveled straight and far); however, for cultural reasons, the same expression could probably not

be used for a person driving a nail with a hammer. The details of vocabulary usage are complex and intricate, and should not be neglected in introductory linguistics courses. And to teach and learn the polysemous uses of common vocabulary, a discourse approach is essential.

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