

ANTHROPOCENTRIC PRAGMALINGUISTICS

Summary

Pragmatics as a subdiscipline of semiotics Franciszek Grucza's formulation of an anthropocentric theory of languages required the redefinition of certain concepts in pragmalinguistics and speech acts. Admittedly, from its very inception the dominant view in pragmalinguistics was that it does not deal with an abstract language system, but rather its actual variants, or idiolects, research has described the phenomena of communication using a bird's eye view, so to speak, as seen by an outside observer, and not from the perspective of a participant of the communicative act.

An anthropocentric point of view assumes that the focus of attention for research into communication should be the individual with all their features, and thus also the sphere of the psyche. It is undisputable that it is necessary to integrate research and solve research problems by adopting an interdisciplinary psychological-sociological-cultural studies-linguistic perspective. The demand to incorporate individuals into research from the communication point of view is particularly appropriate.

If we conduct a superficial review of daily communication, we immediately notice the huge diversity of human verbal behaviour along with uniform parameters of communicative situations and the very same illocution. The problem for pragmalinguistic research is the analysis of utterances that are ironic, sarcastic, mocking, insinuating or verbally aggressive. In extreme cases it becomes impossible to identify illocutional structures. In anthropocentric pragmalinguistics we come to the following assumptions:

- the intentions of individuals performing speech acts are primarily unintelligible for their interlocutors;
- the verbal behaviour of speakers is in the majority of cases ineffective from the point of view of communicative economy;
- pragmalinguistic description is impeded by using the concept *language* instead of *idiolect*;
- the interactant's psychological profile has the deciding influence on the communicative situation;
- all components of the speech act depend on the attitude of the speaker: illocutionary, locutionary and perlocutionary, with the latter also depending on the speech act receiver's attitude.

By introducing a psychological aspect to pragmalinguistic description we also effect a transition from objectively observing the speaker and receiver as

language users to examining them as real individuals acting in defined communicative situations where they use real language in its an individual variant – their idiolect. We assume as certain that the individual's attitude to the world around derives from their personality.

Among the many constituents of personality we select the individual's attitude to others around him or her, as this exerts the decisive influence on the course of interaction in which these individuals participate. Following Janusz Reykowski we refer to these attitudes as levels. The fundamental criterion, which distinguishes both levels, is the degree of centration: focussing exclusively on oneself – on the first level (extreme egocentrism) or exclusively on others (extreme allocentration). Reykowski's inspiration in distinguishing five levels was his observation and analysis of public debates. It is this sphere of communication that best illustrates our thesis that at the moment in which they initiate a speech act, the speaker sets its boundaries, establishes the relations between themselves and their interlocutor, and defines the rules of conduct for other participants, often forcing their partners into verbal behaviour which is at odds with their true nature and intentions.

In view of these considerations, we consider it appropriate to redefine the parameters of communicative situations, such as place, time and length of interaction. Aside from this physical setting, what is known as 'the social occasion' also exists, in which a particular individual acts in the presence of others. In our anthropocentric view we must examine the parameters of communicative situations in two ways, distinguishing those parameters shaped by external factors and those shaped by the initiator of the speech act. We pay special attention to the issue of the relations between interlocutors. The symmetry or asymmetry of these relations is a convergence of factors derived from the description of the social roles performed by a particular individual, which we might call objective, as well as the individual's attitude to others, measured by the degree of centration.

From the components of speech acts we can distinguish local illocution, which refers to specific matters; by means of illocutionary acts the speaker might request, thank, inform, ask or warn. This is the external plane of activity. The internal plane is located in the psyche of the speaker and is present prior to the initiation of any verbal action. Global illocution, which stems from the attitude of the speaker to co-operating individuals and is thus dependent on the degree of centration, is found on this plane. Global illocution is superior to local illocution.

It is necessary to reanalyse the concept of presupposition from the anthropocentric point of view. Pragmalinguistic research conducted so far defined presupposition as the assumptions that accompany a speech act, which requires a degree of clarification: presuppositions exist in the consciousness of those performing verbal acts and constitute resources understood as knowledge about diverse phenomena. If the speaker's resources diverge wholly or partially from those of the receiver, performance of the speech act will fail. We can differentiate the following types of presupposition; individual presuppositions - individually determined; environmental presuppositions are determined geographically and in part, socially; ethnic presuppositions exist in the consciousness of all members of an ethnic group; many nations or ethnic groups share the same cultural area,

thus we may distinguish cultural presuppositions; finally there are also universal presuppositions, referring to humanity as a whole and life on our planet.

The classification of speech acts presented in this publication dates from 2010 and has been complemented by the author to include psychological aspects: in individuals with different degrees of concentration there is an increase or decrease in the likelihood of particular speech acts occurring or their structure changing. This article finishes with an analysis of fragments taken from literature which illustrate the phenomena being discussed and the model applied here facilitates a more satisfactory analysis of human behaviour in communicative situations.