iJRASET
International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 12 **Issue:** VI **Month of publication:** June 2024

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2024.63303

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International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 12 Issue VI June 2024- Available at www.ijraset.com

Pragmatic Function of Linguistic Units

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Annotation: ***This article explores the pragmatic function of linguistic units in communication, focusing on how language goes beyond its literal meaning to convey nuanced messages. Key aspects include context sensitivity, implicature, presupposition, speech acts, politeness strategies, deixis, and conversational maxims. Additionally, cultural pragmatics, anaphora/cataphora, indirect speech acts, discourse markers, speech accommodation theory, and non-literal language use such as irony and sarcasm are discussed. Understanding these pragmatic elements is vital for effective communication across diverse contexts and cultures, facilitating accurate interpretation and successful interaction between speakers and listeners.***
Keywords: pragmatic function, linguistic units, context sensitivity, implicature, presupposition, speech acts, politeness strategies, deixis, conversational maxims

I. INTRODUCTION

The pragmatic function of linguistic units refers to how language is used in communication to convey meaning beyond the literal interpretation of words and phrases. Pragmatics examines how context, speaker intentions, and social conventions influence interpretation. Below are several essential aspects regarding the pragmatic role of linguistic components:

II. MAIN PART

1) *Context Sensitivity:* Pragmatic meaning often depends on the context in which language is used. The same linguistic unit can have different interpretations in different situations.
2) *Implicature:* Sometimes, speakers convey meaning indirectly through implicature. This involves implying something without explicitly stating it. For example, saying "It's cold in here" might imply "Please close the window."
3) *Presupposition:* Linguistic units may carry presuppositions, which are assumptions that speakers expect their audience to accept as true. For instance, in the sentence "John stopped smoking," there is a presupposition that John used to smoke.
4) *Speech Acts:* Pragmatics considers how language is used to perform actions, known as speech acts. Uttering "I promise to be there" isn't just conveying information but also committing oneself to a future action
5) *Politeness Strategies:* Linguistic units can be used to convey politeness or mitigate face-threatening acts. For example, using "Could you please pass the salt?" instead of "Pass the salt" involves politeness strategies.
6) *Deixis:* Language relies on deixis, where certain words or phrases depend on the context for interpretation. For instance, "I'll take this one" requires knowledge of what "this one" refers to in the context.
7) *Conversational Maxims:* Cooperative communication is guided by Grice's conversational maxims, which include principles like relevance, quantity, quality, and manner. Violating these maxims can convey meaning beyond the literal interpretation.
8) *Contextual Inference:* Pragmatics involves making inferences based on the context of a conversation or discourse. Listeners often fill in missing information or make connections based on contextual cues.
9) *Conversational Implicature:* Conversations often involve implicatures, where speakers convey meaning indirectly. Grice distinguished between conventional implicature (encoded in the meaning of specific words or phrases) and conversational implicature (inferred based on the context of the conversation).
10) *Cultural Pragmatics:* Pragmatic norms can vary across cultures, leading to differences in communication styles and interpretations. Understanding cultural pragmatics is crucial for effective intercultural communication.
11) *Anaphora and Cataphora:* Anaphoric references point backward to previously mentioned elements (e.g., "She loves dogs. They make her happy."), while cataphoric references point forward to elements that will be mentioned later (e.g., "It was a big problem. The solution came unexpectedly.")
12) *Indirect Speech Acts:* Sometimes, speakers use language indirectly to perform speech acts. For example, saying "Could you pass me the salt?" might function as a request rather than a literal question about the listener's ability.
13) *Discourse Markers:* Discourse markers like "well," "so," and "you know" serve pragmatic functions by signaling relationships between parts of discourse, managing turn-taking, and conveying speaker attitude or stance.

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14) *Speech Accommodation Theory:* Speakers often adjust their language use to accommodate or align with their interlocutors. This accommodation can include changes in speech rate, pitch, vocabulary, and even dialect to facilitate communication.
15) *Irony and Sarcasm:* Pragmatics encompasses the understanding of non-literal language use, such as irony and sarcasm. These involve saying one thing while meaning another, often relying heavily on context and shared knowledge.
16) *Register and Style:* Pragmatics considers how language varies in different registers (formal vs. informal) and styles (e.g., academic, colloquial). The choice of register and style can convey social status, group identity, and communicative goals.

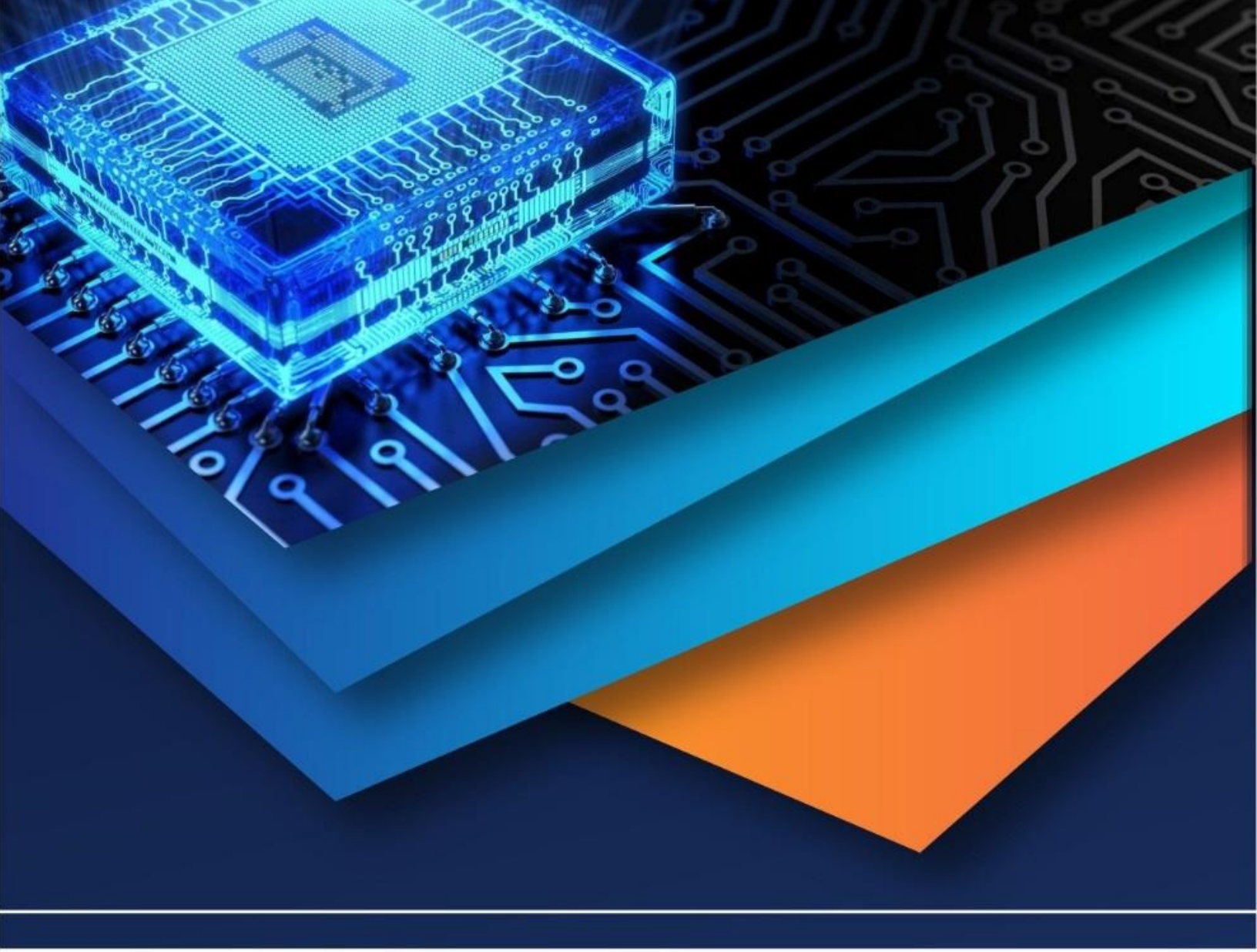
III. CONCLUSION

Overall, the pragmatic function of linguistic units involves the intricate interplay between language, context, and social factors in communication. By understanding these pragmatic aspects, speakers and listeners can navigate language use more effectively to achieve their communicative goals.

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