# Pragmatic Linguistics

## Prof. Maria Cristina Gatti

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to introduce the turning points of pragmatic linguistics, retracing the main contributions to the pragmatic twist of linguistic reflection. Starting from the premise that speaking means doing, the course aims to examine direct and indirect speech acts, with a focus on the argumentative dimensions of the apology speech act. Furthermore, it will analyse the modulations of illocutionary forces through mitigation and reinforcement processes. Then, it will explore the relationship between the said and the unsaid and the role of the implicit elements of discourse in communicative interactions. Also, the pragmatic perspective will be extended to discourse with a focus on the pragmatic connectives/connectors determining its thread. Finally, it will identify the intercultural dimensions of pragmatics, highlighting the influence of cultural context on the pragmatic functions of discourse.

*At the end of the course, students will be able to:*

-find their way among the main theoretical models of the discipline;

- use theoretical tools in the pragmatic analysis of empirical data taken from different communicative situations.

*At the end of the course, students will be able to:*

- apply their newly-acquired knowledge to the identification of direct and indirect speech acts;

- describe the modulation processes of illocutionary forces;

- identify the implicit elements of discourse and the presupposition ‘accommodation’ dynamics;

- reconstruct, from an inferential perspective, the discourse markers that are not specified using pragmatic connectors.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Speaking as doing: the pragmatic twist in linguistics.

From action to communicative interaction.

J. L. Austin, J. R. Searle, and the Speech Act Theory.

Direct and indirect speech acts; the processes of modulation of illocutionary forces.

The apology speech act from a pragmatic-argumentative perspective.

Grice’s model.

The said and the unsaid: the implicit elements of discourse and the dynamic of the presuppositional accommodation.

From connectives to pragmatic connectors: the ‘thread’ of the speech.

Pragmatics from a cross-cultural perspective.

***READING LIST***

M. C. Gatti, A. Rocci, Arguments for forgiveness. A pragmatic-argumentative note on apologies, in G. Gobber & A. Rocci (eds.), Language, reason and education. Studies in honor of Eddo Rigotti, Peter Lang, Berne 2014, p. 123-148.

M. C. Gatti, L’atto linguistico di scusa in una prospettiva di congruità del discorso. Come si argomentano le scuse, in M. C. Gatti, Dai connettivi ai connettori. A proposito di “filo del discorso”, EduCatt, Milan 2018, p. 65-77 (Chapter four).

C. Bazzanella, Linguistica e pragmatica del linguaggio, Laterza, Bari, 2005, p. 147-167 (Chapter 3 – La teoria degli atti linguistici).

S. C. Levinson, Pragmatics, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1983 (1 chapter of students’ choice).

Austin, How to Do Things with Words (Second Edition), J. O. Urmson, M. Sbisà eds., Harvard University Press, 1975.

Further teaching material will be made available during the course and on the Lecturer’s webpage on Blackboard.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures in class and workshops in which the theoretical categories will be applied to the pragmatic analysis of empirical data taken from different types of communicative situations.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Final oral exam, aimed to assess the knowledge of the content of the textbooks specified in the reading list and the additional teaching material made available on Blackboard. Students will have to demonstrate not only that they have acquired the foundations of the discipline (60% of the final mark), but also that they can apply the contents and the methods learnt in class to the pragmatic analysis of empirical data (40% of the final mark).

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

The course will take into account the previous knowledge acquired in the field of general linguistics, with a constant attention to the renegotiation of the meanings of the terms in use, in order to ensure a shared theoretical categoriality.

*This is a semester course taking place during semester 1.*

Further information can be found on the lecturer’s webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENGor on the Faculty notice board.