CHAPTER-II

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PRAGMATICS AND SPEECH ACTS

2.0 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, the researcher focused on the importance and the absolute need for communication in the professional sphere today, which is determined by the culture, the size, the complexity and the hierarchy in organizations. We also documented a few research findings on professional interaction specifying the organizational structures and the nature of interaction thereof. In this chapter, we are going to focus on the two key words of the topic of this thesis which are Speech Acts and Pragmatics. We will survey the developments in Pragmatics and Speech Acts, both conceptual and historical, during the last forty odd years. This study also shows how Speech Act Theory has become “Pragmatics”. What do pragmatic methods give us in the way of greater understanding of how the human mind works, how humans communicate and in general, how they use language? The general answer is: pragmatics is needed if we want a fuller, deeper and generally more reasonable account of human language behavior. A more practical answer would be that outside of pragmatics, no understanding happens; sometimes, a pragmatic account is the only one that makes sense.

In this chapter we will look at the body of concepts, the theories relating to Pragmatics and Speech Act.
2.1 The meaning of Pragmatics

The past twenty-seven odd years have witnessed an ever-growing interest in pragmatics. There have been about seven international conferences on Pragmatics in Viareggio 1985, Antwerp 1987, Barcelona 1990, Kobe 1993, Mexico 1996, Reims 1998, and Budapest 2000. The International Pragmatics Association, IPrA, has been in existence for more than fifteen years; two international journals (the Journal of Pragmatics since 1977; Pragmatics since 1991) are currently being published.

Pragmatics is generally considered to be the study of the ability of speakers to communicate more than that which is explicitly stated. Mey (2004) writes:

‘Pragmatics is essentially about the users of language in a real-life situation, and about the conditions that enable those users to employ linguistic techniques and materials effectively and appropriately.’

Pragmatics is the study of the context-dependent aspects of meaning which are systematically abstracted away from the construction of logical form. In the semiotic trichotomy developed by Morris, Carnap, and Peirce in the 1930’s, syntax addresses the formal relations of signs to one another, semantics the relation of signs to what they denote, and pragmatics the relation of signs to their users and interpreters.

Pragmatics seeks to ‘characterize the features of the speech context which help determine which proposition is expressed by a given sentence’ (Stalnaker 1972). The meaning of a sentence can be regarded as a function from a context (including time, place, and possible world) into a proposition, where a proposition is a function from a possible world into a truth value. Pragmatics aspect of meaning involves the interaction of an expression’s context of utterance and the interpretation of elements within that
expression. It is the study of meaning arising from language in context, in other words, the meaning intended by the speaker or text sender and understood by the listener or text receiver. When the communication act is successful, these meanings coincide, and when it is not, they diverge to a greater or lesser degree. As such, pragmatics focuses on the effect of context on communicative behavior as well as on how inferences are made by the receiver in order to arrive at the final interpretation of an utterance. The scope of pragmatic meaning can be entire utterances as well as individual lexical units.

Here are a few definitions of pragmatics that give a clearer insight into what pragmatics involves thereof.

- Pragmatics is the study of how people use language (Macmillan Dictionary online)
- Pragmatics is the practical knowledge needed to use language for communicative purposes (McGraw Hill online).
- Pragmatics “studies the factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effects of our choice on others.” (David Crystal),
- Pragmatics is a way of investigating and understanding, without ambiguity, ‘meaning beyond the words’. The extra meaning is there, not because of the semantic aspects of the words themselves, but because users (either as speakers/writers or hearers/readers) share certain contextual knowledge with the writer or speaker of the text. (Steve Campsall)

Yule (1996), focuses on this definition of pragmatics in terms of study; i.e. pragmatics is 1) the study of speaker meaning, i.e. the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader);
2) the study of contextual meaning, i.e. the interpretation of speaker meaning in its context, since context affects what is said;

3) the study of how more gets communicated than is said. In a communicative act, the speaker usually interacts with a listener, who is called to make inferences about what is said in order to interpret the speaker’s intended meaning;

4) the study of the expression of relative distance, i.e. the physical, social, or conceptual distance (or closeness) between the speaker and the listener.

Pragmatics is the only field of linguistic analysis to be concerned with humans and their verbal (and non-verbal) interactions. This inevitably poses a series of problems, which decrease or increase depending on the degree of familiarity between the speaker and the listener, that is on what ‘Yule’ refers to as the relative distance between the speaker and the listener: the closer the distance between speakers, (e.g. a familiar social group), the more successful their interaction. Most definitions of pragmatics pay lip service to Charles Morris’s famous definition of pragmatics as “the study of the relation of signs to interpreters” (1938). In a modern, communication-oriented terminology, we prefer to talk about ‘messages’ and ‘language users’; in contrast to traditional linguistics, which first and foremost concentrates on the elements and structures, such as sounds and sentences that the language users produce, pragmatics focuses on the language-using humans. Put differently, pragmatics is interested in the process of producing language and in its producers, not just in the end-product, language. Pragmatics, as suggested is indeed a new paradigm of research; hence it is obliged to come up with a new definition of the object of that research. What would such a new definition imply with regard to the research object in question, language, in its ‘old’ vs. its ‘new’ interpretation which is,
language as a human product vs. language in its human use? Or one could simply divide the study of language into two independent parts: one, a description of its structure (as dealt with by the traditional methods of grammar), the other, a description of its use (to be taken care of by pragmatics).

The proper domain of pragmatics would then be what Chomsky has called performance, that is to say, the way the individual goes about using language. This concrete linguistic practice would be distinguished from an abstract competence, understood as the user’s knowledge of the language and its rules. This viewpoint is neatly captured by Katz, who says: “Grammars are theories about the structure of sentence types . . . Pragmatic theories, in contrast, explicate the reasoning of speakers and hearers” (1977). Specialized language pragmatics is directly related to the situations in which this type of communication occurs, and to the ways that the text sender and receiver potentially and effectively deal with them. Such communicative situations are the focus of the external or socio-cultural view of pragmatics. If pragmatics is ‘the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed’ (Stalnaker 1972), speech-act theory constitutes a central sub-domain. Given these definitions of pragmatics, another important aspect must be addressed: pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to comprehend, construct, and convey meanings that are both accurate and appropriate for the social and cultural circumstances in which communication occurs. This is the goal for second language learners, and it is a challenging task. Blackman (cited in Barron, 2003) identified pragmatic competence as one element of communicative competence, placing pragmatic competence as part of illocutionary
competence, which is a combination of speech acts and speech functions along with the appropriate use of language in context which is discussed a little later in this chapter.

2.2 What are the elements of pragmatics that lead to pragmatic competence?

Pragmatics, as the above discussion shows, is all about communicating appropriately in context. Communication involves language, verbal or written, but it involves many other aspects that go beyond the words in specific speech acts. All aspects of appropriate communication is defined as “pragmatic elements.” Second language learners need to acquire knowledge of and fluency in these pragmatic elements in order to acquire pragmatic competence. Many sociolinguists have addressed these elements. Hymes (1974) proposed a model using the mnemonic device S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G to illustrate the key elements. S represents “setting” and “scene,” the social and physical situation where the communication occurs, including time of day. P stands for “participants,” the people involved in the communication and their roles and relationships. E describes “ends,” the purpose or intended outcome of the communication. A represents “act sequence,” the order of exchanges or pieces of the overall communication. K stands for ‘key,” the tone or manner of the exchange. It describes “instrumentalities,” forms and styles of speech, including register. N represents “norms,” the social expectations or rules that underlie or inform the communication, namely, what is acceptable. G stands for “genre,” the kind of speech act or communication involved. This model provides a broad picture of relevant aspects in analyzing and understanding how they are part of appropriate communication. For example, what would be the appropriate communication for a male supervisor
reprimanding a female employee in a private meeting in his office at the end of the workday about an important appointment she missed? He wants to set a firm but gentle tone since she is a long-time, valued employee and he wants to keep her in the company. She, in turn, senses that there is a problem and wants to maintain her composure, even though she often disagrees with this supervisor. Using the SPEAKING model would help us explore and identify appropriate language for this situation.

Pragmatics involve three major communication skills set:

1. Using language for different purposes, such as
   - greeting (e.g., hello, goodbye)
   - informing (e.g., I'm going to get a cookie)
   - demanding (e.g., Give me a cookie)
   - promising (e.g., I'm going to get you a cookie)
   - requesting (e.g., I would like a cookie, please)

2. Changing language according to the needs of a listener or situation, such as
   - talking differently to a baby than to an adult
   - giving background information to an unfamiliar listener
   - speaking differently in a classroom than on a playground

3. Following rules for conversations, group discussions, debates and storytelling, such as
   - taking turns in conversation
   - introducing topics of conversation
   - staying on topic
• rephrasing when misunderstood
• how to use verbal and nonverbal signals
• how close to stand to someone when speaking
• how to use facial expressions and eye contact

Rules may vary across cultures and within cultures. It is important to understand the rules of your communication partner. Pragmatics, in simple terms, is about culture, communication, and in the case of second languages, about intercultural communication. In order for second language learners to acquire pragmatic competence, they need to acquire cultural understanding and communication skills.

2.3 Tracing the History of Pragmatics

Although pragmatics is a relatively new branch of linguistics, research on it can be dated back to ancient Greece and Rome where the term Pragmaticus’ is found in late Latin and Pragmaticos’ in Greek, both meaning ‘practical’. Modern use and current practice of pragmatics is credited to the influence of the American philosophical doctrine of pragmatism. The pragmatic interpretation of semiotics and verbal communication studies in Foundations of the Theory of Signs by Charles Morris (1938), for instance, helped neatly expound the differences of mainstream enterprises in semiotics and linguistics. For Morris, ‘pragmatics studies the relations of signs to interpreters’, while ‘semantics studies the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable’, and ‘syntactic studies the formal relations of signs to one another.’ By elaborating the sense of pragmatism in his concern for conversational meanings, Grice (1975)
enlightened modern treatment of meaning by distinguishing two kinds of meaning, natural and non-natural. Grice suggested that pragmatics should centre on the more practical dimension of meaning, namely the conversational meaning which was later formulated in a variety of ways (Levinson 1983; Leech 1983).

Practical concerns also helped shift pragmatists focus to explaining naturally occurring conversations which resulted in hallmark discoveries of the Cooperative Principle by Grice (1975) and the Politeness Principle by Leech (1983). Subsequently, Green (1989) explicitly defined pragmatics as natural language understanding. This was echoed by Blakemore (1990) in her ‘Understanding Utterances: the Pragmatics of Natural Language’ and Grundy (1995) in his ‘Doing Pragmatics’. The impact of pragmatism has led to cross linguistic international studies of language use which resulted in, among other things, Sperber and Wilson's (1986) Relevance Theory which convincingly explains how people comprehend and utter a communicative act. The Anglo-American tradition of pragmatic study has been tremendously expanded and enriched with the involvement of researchers mainly from the Continental countries such as the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Belgium. A symbol of this development was the establishment of the IPrA (the International Pragmatic Association) in Antwerp in 1987. In its Working Document, IPrA proposed to consider pragmatics as a theory of linguistic adaptation and look into language use from all dimensions (Verschueren, 1987).

Throughout its development, pragmatics has been steered by the philosophical practice of pragmatism and evolved to maintain its independence as a linguistic subfield by keeping to its tract of being practical in treating the everyday concerned meaning.
2.3.1 The Pragmatics Theory of Communication

The systems perspective of communication states that control over the communication process is shared among the members of the interpersonal system rather than held in the hands of the sender (as assumed in the linear model). Also, from the standpoint of systems theory:

human communication is not a one-way process, as suggested by sender-message-channel-receiver oriented models . . . but rather a multidirectional phenomenon with no distinguishable beginning or end.

The premises of systems theorists were key to the development of the relational model of communication by a group of researchers that included Bateson, Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson. They worked together at the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, California, and became known as the Palo Alto Group, or the pragmatists. These researchers conceptualized the communication process as an open system. Because open systems interact with the environment, they saw the context of a communication act as highly important. “Environments characteristically affect the systems which interact with them and are, in turn, affected by those systems.” As an interpersonal system changes in response to the environment or to changes within system members, the context of the message changes. In the systems view, there is no fixed meaning for a message. Messages are given meaning from the context in which they exist.

The now-classic Pragmatics of Human Communication provides the foundation for a large body of interpersonal communication research. It deals with “pragmatic behavioral effects of communication”. Thus, every communication has dual dimensions: content/report and relationship/command. To clarify these concepts, “The report aspect
conveys information and is, therefore, synonymous in human communication with the content of the message,” whereas “The command aspect, on the other hand, refers to what sort of a message it is to be taken as, and, therefore, ultimately to the relationship between the communicants.” F. E. Millar and L. Edna Rogers interpret content as referring to “the object or referent specified in the message,” whereas relational characteristics refer to the “reciprocal rules of interdependence that combine the persons into an interactive system.” It is important to understand that the relational model proposed by the pragmatists is concerned with both the effect of communication on the receiver and the effect the receiver’s reaction has on the sender. Thus, focus is on “the sender–receiver relation, as mediated by communication.” The interactivity of the communication process is of vital importance to the pragmatists who reject theories that “limit themselves to the study of communication as a one-way phenomenon (from speaker to listener) and stop short of looking at communication as an interaction process.” One of the assumptions of a linear model is that the sender (or source) of a message is in control, that the goal of communication is to transfer information from sender to receiver. The relational perspective asserts that control is not centered in the sender nor in the receiver, rather, they are both part of a larger system that forms their relationship.

Axioms proposed by Watzlawick and his colleagues describe other important aspects of communication. One proposes that “human beings communicate both digitally and analogically.” Digital code is verbal language; analogic code is nonverbal. Another axiom distinguishes symmetrical and complementary interactions. When two communicators in a relationship behave similarly, the relationship is said to be
symmetrical; differences are minimized. When communicator differences are maximized, however, a complementary relationship is said to exist. This is so because in a complementary relationship there is a difference in power, control, and status:

A boss–employee relationship is usually complementary, as are those between teacher–student, doctor–patient, policeman–automobile driver, president–secretary and other relationships based on inequality of control.

Many significant authors in the field of communication come from fields not explicitly within the domain. Some are from linguistics, some are anthropologists, others sociologists. Some come from the “hard sciences” such as biology or mathematics. There are several theorists whose origins are outside of the field of communication, but who had a profound influence on how communication is seen today.

### 2.3.2 The Palo Alto Group –called the Pragmatists

The Palo Alto Group was a team that worked within the field of clinical psychiatry that took a systemic approach to human relations, placing a focus on human reactions to interactions. Gregory Bateson was a preeminent scholar in this school, and his work influenced others, such as Paul Watzlawick, who adapted Bateson’s ideas to the broader field of communication. In this approach, primary focus is on the interaction between people influencing and being influenced by one another in the present moment, as distinct from many other approaches that emphasize the individual in isolation and what is purported to be going on inside that motivates them. (Ray and Brasher, 2010)

The Palo Alto Group was concerned with behaviour modification – modifying those behaviours it found to be dysfunctional. To do so, “Therapy becomes experimentation with various methods of persuasion to influence clients to take action that is different
from what they have tried until now” (Ray and Brasher, 2010). While Bateson’s background was in anthropology and psychiatry, Watzlawick used his ideas as a base for his theory of communication.

2.3.3 Watzlawick and his Axioms of Communication

Watzlawick, along with Janet Beavin, and Don Jackson produced Pragmatics of Human Communication (1967), which outlined 5 axioms of communication:

The first one says that “one cannot not communicate”: Here the authors consider that there is no opposite to behaviour, one must behave in some way. All behaviour has a communicative element to it, it is impossible to not communicate (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). Activity or inactivity, words or silence all have message value: they influence others and these others, in turn, cannot not respond to these communications and are thus themselves communicating. It should be clearly understood that the mere absence of talking or of taking notice of each other is no exception to what has just been asserted. The woman at a shopping mall who looks straight ahead, or a bus driver who sits with his eyes closed before beginning to take the wheel, are both communicating that they do not want to speak to anybody or be spoken to, and their onlookers usually "get the message" and respond appropriately by leaving them alone. This, obviously, is just as much an interchange of communication as an animated discussion. Neither can we say that "communication" only takes place when it is intentional, conscious, or successful, that is, when mutual understanding occurs. Whether message sent equals message received is an important but different order of analysis, as it must rest ultimately on evaluations of specific, introspective, subject reported data, which we choose to neglect for the exposition of a behavioral-theory of communication.
The second axiom states that “Every communication has a content and relationship aspect such that the latter classifies the former and is therefore a metacommunication” (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). The content function is the information itself in the communication, and the relationship aspect dictates “what sort of a message it should be taken as”. This is another way of saying that a communication not only conveys information, but that at the same time it imposes behavior. Example of a sign reads that the following: ‘if you think that our workers are not polite you should speak to our director’. This is communication within communication. It could be interpreted as either complaint to the director about rude behavior of the workers or it may mean that the director is even more rude. To interpret a communication of this sort, context and relationship both are important because the relationship clarifies the content of the message.

The third axiom emphasizes that “The nature of a relationship is contingent upon the punctuation of the communicational sequences between the communicants”. Punctuation of messages organizes behavior to the messages. To an outside observer, a series of communications can be viewed as an uninterrupted sequence of interchanges. However, the participants in the interaction always introduce what Whorf (1956), Bateson and Jackson (1967) have termed the "punctuation of the sequence of events." For example, we call a person in a group behaving in one way the "leader" and another the "follower," although on reflection it is difficult to say who comes first or where one would be without the other. If we could identify one as a leader it may be so because the others reinforce it by supporting the statements made by the so-called leader. The role
may change and the ‘leader’ may at some point become the ‘follower’. This depends on the series of communications that have taken place.

Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson believe that “Human beings communicate both digitally and analogically”. In human communication, objects in the widest sense can be referred to in two entirely different ways. They can either be represented by a likeness, such as a drawing, or they can be referred to by a name. Thus, in the written sentence "The cat has caught a mouse", the nouns could be replaced by pictures; if the sentence were spoken, the actual cat and the mouse could be pointed to. Needless to say, this would be an unusual way of communicating, and normally the written or spoken "name," that is, the word, is used. These two types of communication the one by a self-explanatory likeness, the other by a word are, of course, also equivalent to the concepts of the analogic and the digital respectively. Whenever a word is used to name something, it is obvious that the relation between the name and the thing named is an arbitrarily established one. Words are arbitrary signs that are manipulated according to the logical syntax of language. There is no particular reason why the three letters "c-a-t" should denote a particular animal. In ultimate analysis, it is only a semantic convention of the English language, and outside this convention there exists no other correlation between any word and the thing it stands for, with the possible but insignificant exception of onomatopoeic words. As Bateson and Jackson point out: "There is nothing particularly five-like in the number five; there is nothing particularly table-like in the word 'table'" (Bateson & Jackson, 1964).

In analogic communication, on the other hand, there is something particularly "thing-like" in what is used to express the thing. Analogic communication can be more
readily referred to the thing it stands for. The difference between these two modes of communication may become somewhat clearer if it is realized that no amount of listening to a foreign language on the radio, for example, will yield an understanding of the language, whereas some basic information can fairly easily be derived from watching sign language and from the so-called intention movements, even when used by a person of a totally different culture. Analogic communication, we suggest, has its roots in far more archaic periods of evolution and is, therefore, of much more general validity than the relatively recent, and far more abstract, digital mode of verbal communication. What then is analogic communication? The answer is relatively simple: it is virtually a nonverbal communication. This term, however, is deceptive, because it is often restricted to body movement only, to the behavior known as kinesics. We hold that the term must comprise posture, gesture, facial expression, voice inflection, the sequence, rhythm, and cadence of the words themselves, and any other nonverbal manifestation of which the organism is capable, as well as the communicational clues unfailingly present in any context in which an interaction takes place. Man is the only organism known to use both the analogic and the digital modes of communication. In short, if we remember that every communication has a content and a relationship aspect, we can expect to find that the two modes of communication not only exist side by side but complement each other in every message. We can further expect to find that the content aspect is likely to be conveyed digitally whereas the relationship aspect will be predominantly analogic in nature.

The same two basic modes of communication can be found at work in the field of man-made organisms: there are computers which utilize the U-or-none principle of vacuum tubes or transistors and are called digital, because they are basically calculators
working with digits; and there is another class of machines that manipulate discrete,
positive magnitudes, the analogues of the data and hence are called analogic.

The fifth and final axiom is that “All communicational interchanges are either
symmetrical or complementary, depending on whether they are based on equality or
difference” (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). This axiom can be described as
relationships based on either equality or difference. If partners tend to mirror each other's
behavior, their interaction can be termed symmetrical. Weakness or strength, goodness or
badness, are not relevant here, for equality can be maintained in any of these areas. In
another case, one partner's behavior complements that of the other, forming a different
sort of behavioral Gestalt, and is called complementary. Symmetrical interaction, then, is
characterized by equality and the minimization of difference, while complementary
interaction is based on the maximization of difference. There are two different positions
in a complementary relationship. One partner occupies what has been variously described
as the superior, primary, or "one-up" position, and the other the corresponding inferior,
secondary, or "one-down" position. These terms are quite useful as long as they are not
equated with "good" or "bad," "strong" or "weak." A complementary relationship may be
set by the social or cultural context (as in the cases of mother and infant, doctor and
patient, or teacher and student). In either case, it is important to emphasize the
interlocking nature of the relationship, in which dissimilar but fitted behaviors evoke
each other. One partner does not impose a complementary relationship on the other, but
rather each behaves in a manner which presupposes, while at the same time providing
reasons for the behavior of the other: their definitions of the relationship. The relationship
between the subjects and the reactions of each to the communication of the other should be considered, especially in the context of a series of communications.

The analysis of the use of language in communicative situations is seen as core business in pragmatics. This brings us to the two broad traditions of pragmatics, the Anglo-American pragmatics and the European-Continental pragmatics. Assumptions made about how we might best conceptualize communication are thus crucial to much of the research that has been carried out in pragmatics over the past forty years. While the field of pragmatics encompasses a diverse range of approaches to language use, much of the research can be aligned with two fairly broad traditions: cognitive-philosophical pragmatics (alternatively known as linguistic pragmatics or the so-called Anglo-American pragmatics), and sociocultural-interactional pragmatics (or the so-called European-Continental pragmatics).

The first broad research tradition in pragmatics, which is founded on the seminal work of Grice (1967, 1975), is the one most likely to be familiar to linguists, as it conceives of pragmatics as being “a core component of a theory of language, on par with phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics” (Huang 2007). In cognitive-philosophical pragmatics, speaker meaning is claimed as the central concern of pragmatics. Speaker meaning is defined as arising from speakers expressing intentions through what they say, and recipients recognizing or attributing those intentions to speakers. The importance of intention in the cognitive-philosophical tradition in pragmatics can be traced back directly to Grice’s (1957) seminal work on (speaker) meaning. Grice argued that a speaker meant something by x if and only if the speaker “intended the utterance of x to produce some effect in an audience by means of the
recognition of this intention” (Grice 1957). This crucial insight or variants thereof has been carried into research on deixis, presupposition, implicature, and speech acts, as well as politeness and other phenomena of interest in pragmatics. The notion of intention thus lies at the core of most definitions of speaker meaning prevalent in pragmatics. The conceptualization of communication as the expression and recognition/attribution of speaker intentions underlies much of the theorizing in Gricean and neo-Gricean pragmatics (Bach and Harnish 1979; Bach 2004; Dascal 2003; Grice 1967, 1989; Horn 2004; Jaszczolt 2002; Levinson 1983, 2000, 2006), Relevance Theory (Carston 2002; Sperber and Wilson 1995), Speech Act Theory (Searle 1969, 1975), and Expression Theory (Davis 2003) among others. Thus, while there are important differences in how speaker intentions are conceptualized and what constraints there are on the inferential processes leading to recipients attributing those intentions to speakers, communication is assumed to be crucially dependent on such intentions in cognitive-philosophical pragmatics.

In sociocultural-interactional pragmatics, however, which can be broadly defined as “a general cognitive, social, and cultural perspective on linguistic phenomena in relation to their usage in forms of behaviour” (Verschueren 1999), or alternatively as “the study of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society” (Mey 2001), the place of intention in the conceptualization of communication is less clear-cut. It appears, then, that while the role intention itself plays is somewhat equivocal in sociocultural-interactional pragmatics, intentions are still seen as playing at least some role in the prevailing conceptualization of communication.
One of the most important assumptions made about communication in pragmatics has thus been the claim that it involves speakers expressing their intentions through verbal and nonverbal means and through conceptualizing of meaning. All these issues have been addressed by a pragmatic theory that specifically targets specialized language, whose first task would be to try and bring together the two most common approaches to pragmatics: (i) socio-cultural (external) pragmatics; and (ii) cognition-oriented (internal) pragmatics. Language is regarded not only as meaning something, but also as doing actions, i.e. performing “speech acts”. It is at Oxford in the 1950s that a group of philosophers, called “ordinary language philosophers” concentrated on ordinary language use rather than logical analysis. Pragmatic reflections have really emerged on the philosophical scene with what is called “Speech acts theory”, which essentially originates in the pioneering and revolutionary work of Austin (1911-1960). Austin's aim is to focus on what is done in discourse rather than on what is said (what is said depending, according to him, on what is done). These pragmatic views had undergone a revolutionary change and pragmatics became speech acts. The next section deals with the history of pragmatics revolution.

2.4 The Pragmatics Revolution (1975-2000) and Speech Act Theory

The word “pragmatics,” which derives from the Greek word praxis (which means action or practice), was first introduced by ideal language philosophers as part of a threefold distinction between syntax (or syntactics), semantics and pragmatics. Syntax was defined as the study of internal relations among symbols or signs of a language. Semantics was defined as the study of the relations between signs and their denotations
Pragmatics was defined as the study of the relations between signs and their users. Ideal language philosophers (in the tradition of Frege, Russell, Carnap and Tarski) were mainly interested in the semantic structures of sentences of formal languages especially designed for the purpose of capturing mathematical truths. By contrast, ordinary language philosophers (in the tradition of Wittgenstein, Austin, Strawson and later Searle) were mainly concerned with the distinctive features of the meanings of expressions of natural languages and the variety of their uses in verbal communication. In sharp opposition to ideal language philosophers, ordinary language philosophers stressed two main points which paved the way for latter work in pragmatics.

First, they emphasized the context-dependency of the descriptive content expressed by utterances of sentences of natural languages. Secondly, in reaction to ideal language philosophers, they criticized what Austin (1962b) called the “descriptive fallacy,” according to which the sole point of using language is to state facts or describe the world. As indicated by the title of Austin’s (1962) famous book, ‘How to Do Things with Words’, they argued that by uttering sentences of some natural language, a speaker performs an action, i.e., a speech act: she performs what Austin called an “illocutionary act” with a particular illocutionary force. For example, by using a sentence of some natural language, a speaker may give an order, ask a question, make a threat, a promise, an entreaty, an apology, an assertion and so on. In fact, Austin (1962) sketched an entirely new framework for the description and classification of speech acts. As Green (2007) notes, speech acts are not to be confused with acts of speech: “one can perform an act of speech, say by uttering words in order to test a microphone, without performing a
speech act.” Conversely, one can issue a warning without saying anything, merely by producing a gesture or even a “minatory facial expression.” Around 1975, emphasis began to shift from defining language in terms of form (syntax and phonology) and content (semantics) to defining language in terms of its use. This shift originated in speech act theory, first proposed by the language philosopher John Austin in 1962 and after him, by John Searle in 1969.

2.4.1 Austin and the Speech Act Theory

John Langshaw Austin dominated philosophy in Oxford from the end of the Second World War until death ended his tenure as White’s Professor of Moral Philosophy in 1960. His work on speech acts has had a significant and lasting impact on the wider philosophical world. Another key aspect of his work, his views about the assessment of utterances as true and false, has been less well received. Two of his major works—Sense and Sensibilia (1962a) and How to Do Things With Words (1962b)—are posthumous and were assembled by colleagues from his lectures and notes for lectures.

Austin expressed his views of language in three areas: his views of language and philosophy; language and truth; and language and speech acts.

Austin summarized his view on language and philosophy thus:

“First, words are our tools, and, as a minimum, we should use clean tools: we should know what we mean and what we do not, and we must forearm ourselves against the traps that language sets us. Secondly, words are not (except in their own little corner) facts or things: we need therefore to price them off the world, to hold them apart from and against it, so that we can realize their inadequacies and arbitrariness, and can re-look at the world without blinkers. Thirdly, and more
hopefully, our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing, and the connections they have found worth making, in the lifetimes of many generations: these surely are likely to be more sound, since they have stood up to the long test of the survival of the fittest, and more subtle, at least in all ordinary and reasonably practical matters, than any that you or I are likely to think up in our arm-chairs of an afternoon—the most favored alternative method. (1956: 1979) Austin holds, then, that a crucial preliminary to philosophizing on a topic at least where the topic is ‘ordinary and reasonably practical’ would be the detailed study of the language we use to speak on that topic, and of the way that we use it.”

About **language and truth** he states:

“It seems to be fairly generally realized nowadays that, if you just take a bunch of sentences … impeccably formulated in some language or other, there can be no question of sorting them out into those that are true and those that are false; for (leaving out of account the so-called ‘analytic’ sentences) the question of truth and falsehood does not turn only on what a sentence is, nor yet on what it means, but on, speaking very broadly, the circumstances in which it is uttered.

Sentences as such are not either true or false.” (Austin:1962)

**Language and speech acts**

The modern study of speech acts, which this study is concerned with, begins with Austin’s (1962) engaging monograph ‘How to Do Things with Words’, the published version of his William James Lectures delivered at Harvard in 1955. This widely cited work starts with the observation that certain sorts of sentences, e.g., “I christen this ship
the Joseph Stalin”, “I now pronounce you man and wife”; and the like, seem designed to do something, here to christen and wed, respectively, rather than merely to say something. Such sentences, Austin dubbed performatives, in contrast to what he called constatives, the descriptive sentences that until, Austin, were the principal concern of philosophers of language—sentences that seem, pre-theoretically, at least, to be employed mainly for saying something rather than doing something.

The point of Austin’s lectures was, in fact, that every normal utterance has both a descriptive and an effective aspect: that saying something is also doing something. In place of the initial distinction between constatives and performatives, Austin substituted a three-way contrast among the kinds of acts that are performed when language is put to use, namely the distinction between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, all of which are characteristic of most utterances, including standard examples of both performatives and constatives.

2.4.1.1 The three-fold classification of utterances by Austin

1. Locutionary Acts, according to Austin, are acts of speaking, acts involved in the construction of speech, such as uttering certain sounds or making certain marks, using particular words and using them in conformity with the grammatical rules of a particular language and with certain senses and certain references as determined by the rules of the language from which they are drawn.

2. Illocutionary Acts, Austin’s central innovation, are acts done in speaking (hence illocutionary), including and especially that sort of act that is the apparent purpose for using a performative sentence: christening, marrying, and so forth. Austin called attention to the fact that acts of stating or asserting, which are presumably
illocutionary acts, are characteristic of the use of canonical constatives, and such sentence are, by assumption, not performatives. Furthermore, acts of ordering or requesting are typically accomplished by using imperative sentences, and acts of asking whether something is the case are properly accomplished by using interrogative sentences, though such forms are at best very dubious examples of performative sentences. In Lecture XXI of Austin (1962), the conclusion was drawn that the locutionary aspect of speaking is what we attend to most in the case of constatives, while in the case of the standard examples of performative sentences, we attend as much as possible to the illocution.

3. Perlocutionary Act, the third of Austin’s categories of acts is the perlocutionary act, which is a consequence or by-product of speaking, whether intended or not. As the name is designed to suggest, perlocutions are acts performed by speaking. According to Austin, perlocutionary acts consist in the production of effects upon the thoughts, feelings, or actions of the addressee(s), speaker, or other parties, such as causing people to refer to a certain ship as the Joseph Stalin, producing the belief that Sam and Mary should be considered man and wife, convincing an addressee of the truth of a statement, causing an addressee to feel a requirement to do something, and so on.

Austin successfully situates the argument on “meaning” into the use perspective. Strongly influenced by the tradition of logos in Western philosophy, the argument concerning meaning has been founded on the referential theory of meaning, which assumes the linguistic system that connects the signifier with the signified. It is Austin
that went beyond the referential theory that considered the context in which language was actually used.

Austin (1962) provides an analytic framework that regards language as not a referential rule, but rather exists as a set of actions. The classification of locution, illocution, and perlocution is his attempt to deconstruct such a static referential theory that is logically constructed without contexts. The value of Austin’s Speech Act Theory can be identified in this context.

Austin employs the concept of convention to make a distinction between illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts. Although Austin argues that illocutionary acts are conventional, it is arguable whether there must be a convention to exercise an illocutionary act. In other words, is an illocutionary act always conventional? Indeed, Austin is right in that illocutionary forces can be created by relying on the existence of a particular convention in many cases. For instance, a convention enables one to appoint someone in saying “I will appoint you to be Chairman” or “I pronounce you man and wife.” Unless such a convention existed, his or her statement, “I will appoint you to be Chairman,” or “I pronounce you man and wife” would not function properly. The essential question is then what “convention” means to the listener. Now that Austin’s Speech Act Theory is decentralized, convention is not merely a matter of the speaker but that of the listener. Because it is illocution that is conventional, the identification of illocutionary act is also our concern. The concept of convention is inevitable to explicate the mechanism of meaning-making process. When the speaker is conscious of his or her illocutionary act, the speaker certainly utilizes a convention in the execution; and, for the
listener to interpret the illocution of the speaker, the listener cannot help relying on a
certain schema already given to him or her.

In the sense that convention is depicted as something “used” to refer to speaker’s
intention, convention is treated as a set of linguistics rules available for an instrumental
purpose. Thus, in Austin’s view, illocutionary acts are conventional and perlocutionary
acts are non-conventional. To explain this we say: in uttering a sentence, the speaker
indicates a certain speech situation as the present speech situation. Austin’s felicity
conditions define the elements which structure the speech situation, in terms of which a
purported act succeeds or fails.

Austin’s felicity conditions are as follows:

1. (a) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain
   conventional effect.

1. (b) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for
   the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.

2. The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and completely.

3. (a) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain
   thoughts or feelings, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must
   in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct
   themselves, and further

3. (b) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently. (Austin 1962).

Violations of the conditions in 1. (a) and 1. (b) are described as ‘misinvocations’ in
which the purported act is disallowed (Austin 1962).
The felicity condition in 3. (a) reveals an aspect of the speech situation in which the speaker and the hearer share linguistic conventions according to which to utter certain words in certain circumstances by certain persons is counted as performing a certain speech act, which has a certain conventional effect. So the utterance in example (1) indicates a speech situation in which the speaker and the hearer share a Muslim convention of divorce: to utter the sentence in (1) is counted as performing an act of divorce and, as a conventional result, divorce occurs.

Eg. (1) I divorce you. I divorce you. I divorce you.

Similarly, the utterance of the sentence in example (2) indicates a speech situation in which the speaker and the hearer share the linguistic convention of performing an act of reprimand: a certain action or the failure to take a certain action is subject to criticism, and the responsible person is to be blamed formally and publicly for the neglect of his official duties (unlike the act of “telling someone off or scolding”, by a person in official capacity.

Eg. (2) I reprimand you for your negligence.

The felicity condition in (2) reveals another aspect of the speech situation, in which particular persons and particular circumstances exist. So the utterance in example (3) indicates a speech situation in which the speaker is a Christian priest and the hearer is an infant. They are in religious circumstances, such as in a Christian church, and in the presence of the infant’s parents.

Eg. (3) I baptize thee in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Similarly the utterance in example (4) indicates a speech situation in which the speaker and the hearer have a formal, hierarchical relationship to one another, by which the
speaker can charge the hearer to execute a certain action (unlike the act of asking or begging), and does so for his own interest rather than for the hearer’s (unlike the act of allowing or authorizing), and disobedience to the command may have severe consequences.

**Eg. (4)** I order you to release the prisoners.

These scenarios establish that the speech situation can be specified linguistically. By specifying the present act as divorce, reprimand, baptize, and order, the speaker indicates, as the present speech situation, a speech situation where associated conventions are activated, and persons and circumstances specified by those conventions are present. In other words, by specifying what the speaker is currently doing in uttering what he utters, the speaker specifies the speech situation which currently exists between him and the hearer. Those specifications are dependent upon the language. What is regarded as an act and how that act is specified in terms of related acts are largely determined by the language that the speaker uses. We describe this aspect of the speech situation as conventionality of the speech situation.

A violation of the second type of condition in (2) is described as ‘misexecutions’, in which a purported act is vitiated (Austin 1962). This, in turn, depicts a speech situation in which a purported act would be executed in a very specific manner. The felicity condition in (B.1) describes an aspect of the present speech situation in which the present speaker actually utters words in a specific manner to the present hearer. That is, in uttering a sentence, the speaker presents himself as the performer of a certain act to the present hearer: in uttering a sentence, the speaker conveys that I perform this act to you.
In specifying the act as, say, an act of reprimand, the speaker indicates the present speech situation in which the speaker (I) performs this act of reprimand to the hearer (you).

The felicity condition in (2) exposes another aspect of the present speech situation which is acknowledged and revitalised by the hearer. The present speech situation indicated by the speaker as a certain situation can either be acknowledged and revitalized by the hearer who behaves or responds in a given manner, or be dismissed by the hearer who does not do so. For example, when the speaker indicates the present speech situation as a situation of an order in uttering the sentence in (4), i.e. the speaker indicates that I perform on you this act of an order, the hearer may acknowledge and revitalise it by indicating that he is following the order. The hearer may say something like the following:

Eg. (5) Yes, sir.

Alternatively, the hearer may simply release the prisoners. We explain this aspect of the speech situation as actuality, in which actual performance and response are executed.

Austin’s felicity conditions in (1) and (2) allude to two different ways in which speech acts fail. They fail because the conventional procedures for performing acts do not exist or those procedures are such that they cannot be applied to particular cases. They also fail because actual performances do not correspond to conventional procedures: the speaker simply makes a mistake and produces a wrong sound, produces an inaudible sound, misunderstands conventional procedures for the performance of a specific act, or the hearer does not acknowledge the purported act. These infelicitous cases, in turn, expose felicitous cases where actual performances correspond to conventional procedures, i.e., a purported act is the act actually performed by the present speaker: an indicated speech situation is the present speech situation. This is the point at which
abstract convention coincides with physical performance. In one sense, this is the point at which a convention is actualized as a part of the reality with its substance, i.e., an actual illocutionary act; and, in another sense, it is the point at which an action, which is in itself accidental and pointless, is specified by the language as a system of value.

In the following sentences ‘I welcome you’ and ‘I promise to support you’, the speaker indicates the present speech situation as a situation where the act of welcome is sincere and substantial. Specifically, the speaker means what she says, and she approves of and is delighted by the hearer’s presence. This is the aspect of intentionality of the present speech situation, which the felicity condition in 3. (a) clarifies.

Another aspect of intentionality, which the felicity condition 3. (a) clarifies, concerns a future responsibility. That is, the present speech situation is indicated not only as a situation where a purported act is sincere and substantial, but also as a situation where associated future commitment is expressed. For example, in uttering the sentence ‘I promise to support you’, the speaker indicates the present speech situation as a situation which does not exist only at the time of utterance but which will last for a longer period of time, wherein the speaker’s support for the hearer is promised. That is, the felicity conditions in 3. (a) and 3. (b) clarify how the present speech situation is substantiated by the speaker’s associated intention and future responsibility expressed.

Meaning is explained by an examination of linguistic conventions (contained in a language), actual performance (language use), and associated intentions. In linguistics, the general tendency is to describe one aspect of meaning as if it were the essence of meaning. In semantics, linguistic conventions are generally explained by correlating
sentences with states of affairs. In pragmatics, actual performances are studied to describe a certain type or aspect of communication.

Intentionality is described, semantically, in terms of the relation between sentences and associated intentions. Or it is described, pragmatically, as actual performances in which the speaker expresses his intentions. As a result, semantics theories tend to offer the linguistic means that are available to the users without explaining how those means are used to make communication possible. Whereas, pragmatic theories tend to explain what is happening in communication without explaining the available linguistic means. Austin’s theory is promising because it unites all three aspects of meaning, namely linguistic conventions, language use, and intentionality. In this sense, it is a credible general theory of communication.

2.4.2 The relevance of Austin’s classification

The importance of the theory of speech acts for the understanding of language is widely recognised. “Psychologists, for example, have suggested that the acquisition of the concepts underlying speech acts may be a prerequisite for the acquisition of language in general” (Levinson 1983). If this is truly the case, speech act theory may have a lot to offer the computer scientist seeking a way to ‘teach’ machines to converse or at least to interact in a meaningful, coherent manner. It is philosophers of language (such as Wittgenstein and Searle, but especially Austin) who are primarily credited with having noticed that the utterance of some sentences can be treated (under certain well-defined conditions) as the performance of an action. Speech act theory came about as a natural reaction against one of the doctrines prevalent from the 1930s onwards in philosophy – namely that of logical positivism. A central tenet of logical positivism was that unless
one could in principle verify a sentence (i.e. show it to be true or false), it has to be said to be cognitively meaningless in the strict sense. Taking this view to its natural end, however, one might have to conclude that most written or spoken discourse entirely lacks any cognitive meaning.

It was amidst concerns about the ambiguity and verifiability of language that were raised by logical positivism, that Austin developed his theory of speech acts. In the series of William James Lectures, which he delivered at Harvard University in 1955, he outlined his objections to the then current theories. He was quite opposed to any theory that would place truth conditions as central to understanding language:

It was for too long the assumption of philosophers that the business of a ‘statement’ can only be to ‘describe’ some state of affairs, or to ‘state some fact’, which it must do either truly or falsely. Grammarians, indeed, have regularly pointed out that not all sentences are (used in making) statements: there are, traditionally, besides (grammarians’) statements, also questions and exclamations, and sentences expressing commands or wishes or concessions. He also comments that:

...both grammarians and philosophers have been aware that it is by no means easy to distinguish even questions, commands, and so on from statements by means of the few and jejune grammatical marks available, such as word order, mood, and the like... (1975)

Austin goes on to argue that basically the problem is founded on a misconception, or misclassification; philosophers were trying to treat all utterances as verifiable statements, when it is clear that many utterances that look like statements on the surface,
are either not at all, or only partially, intended to convey any propositional facts to a hearer: Along these lines, it has by now been shown ... that many traditional philosophical perplexities have arisen through a mistake, the mistake of taking as straightforward statements of fact utterances which are either (in interesting non-grammatical ways) nonsensical or else intended as something quite different. So, there are some utterances, which although traditionally ascribed the grammatical category of ‘statement’, yet fulfil the following two conditions:

A. they do not ‘describe’ or ‘report’ or constate anything at all, are not ‘true or false’ [hence problematic for logical positivists]; and

B. the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not normally be described as, or, as ‘just’, saying something.

Here are a few examples:-‘I apologize for hitting you.’ ‘I bet you a hundred bucks it will rain tomorrow.’ ‘I object to your insinuations.’ ‘I warn you that trespassers will be prosecuted.’

These type of utterances are used to change the state of the world in some way by performing a kind of action, rather than merely stating something that can be either true or false. Austin called all such utterances (i.e. those containing verbs such as ‘declare’, ‘promise’, ‘object’, ‘pronounce’, ‘name’, etc.) performatives; and he called all ‘ordinary’ declaratives (i.e. those that ‘describe’, ‘report’ or constate and that can be assessed in terms of truth and falsity, such as the sentence “It is raining”), constatives.
Austin noticed that performative utterances could ‘go wrong’ as it were, but not by being ‘false’ so much as by being inappropriate, or unhappy. So, for example, in order for the success of a statement such as ‘I now pronounce you man and wife’ in performing an act of (Christian) marriage, it is necessary that the speaker be an ordained minister of the church (i.e. authorised to perform the ceremony/act), that there be at least two witnesses present, that there be a bride and groom, that neither of the afore-mentioned party be already married, etc. If just anyone were to say these particular words in any other context, they would be deemed inappropriate or unhappy, and would fail to bring about an act of marriage. Note, however, that this does not imply that the utterance of this sentence out of context in this way would lack meaning, or be interpreted as gibberish; but just that the act of marriage is not performed. One could very easily envisage a context in which saying ‘I now pronounce you man and wife’ might be taken as an act of joking, or of insulting. A less formal example of performative utterance ‘infelicity’ would be in an utterance such as ‘I promise to wash the car today’, when the speaker does not do so. Austin says that this cannot be said to be a ‘false’ promise, as the fact that the speaker promised to wash the car would be true. He says that it is the intention to do so that is lacking, so making the act ‘void’ or given in ‘bad faith’.

Austin lists six of these so called ‘primitive devices’ which conversationalists use in order to identify the implicit performance of an act: mood, tone of voice/cadence/emphasis (prosody), adverbs and adverbial phrases, connecting particles, accompaniments of the utterance, and finally the circumstances (or context) of the utterance. These ‘devices’ would be worthwhile looking at them in closer detail.
(1) **Mood:** Austin refers to two uses to indicate overall mood. One is the use of something like the imperative mood (indicated by the main verb) in an utterance, which would typically make it an act of commanding. However, he notes that it may also be an “exhortation or permission or concession or what not!”— thus, showing that it is not a very good indicator of the performance by itself. He gives the example of the phrase ‘shut it’ in various contexts:

‘Shut it, (do) resembles ‘I order you to shut it.’

‘Shut it, (should) resembles ‘I advise you to shut it.’

‘Shut it, (if you like) resembles ‘I permit you to shut it.’

‘Shut it,( if you dare) resembles ‘I dare you to shut it.’

(Very well then), shut it, resembles ‘I consent to you shutting it.’

Or again we may use modal auxiliaries:

‘You may shut it’ resembles ‘I give permission, consent to your shutting it’

‘You must shut it’ resembles ‘I order you, I advise you to shut it’

‘You ought to shut it’ resembles ‘I advise you to shut it’

In the model developed later on, the mood (grammatical, as defined by Austin) of a sentence to be a marker legitimises a set (or category) of performative acts. This is not to say that mood is a conclusive or complete indication of the type of act being performed, but that it is a good starting point, especially if the act is performed directly rather than indirectly. An indirect implicit performative utterance can be described as one that looks as if it is performing one act from its surface structure, but is in fact performing another. For example, the sentence ‘The door is closed’ seems to be a straightforward
statement or assertion of the fact that some door is closed. But, if the speaker was carrying a heavy load and required to pass through the doorway, it could be a request, or even an order that the door be opened. Or if it is obvious to the hearer that the speaker is unable to know whether the door is open or not, it could be taken as a question. In both cases, the speaker’s tone of voice and the context in which the sentence is uttered are the main indicators of the act being performed. This now leads us to the next ‘primitive device’ that Austin claimed is commonly used in conversation in place of an explicit performative.

(2) **Tone of voice/cadence/emphasis (prosody):** These play quite a big part in identifying the role of an utterance in the English language. Austin states that there is no adequate way of representing this particular feature in a written transcription of language.

(3) **Adverbs and adverbial phrases:** These are used to distinguish the ‘degree of or ‘definiteness’ of an utterance. For example, ‘I’ll do X’ might be made less definite by the addition of the adverb ‘probably’, or more definite by the addition of the adverbial phrase ‘without fail’. So we might characterize, the distinction between ‘offering’ or ‘promising’ or ‘predicting’. The importance of adverbials for identifying different speech acts of the same class, but of subtly differing degrees of strength is not fully explored by Austin, but is picked up as one of the central themes in Searle’s work.

(4) **Connecting particles:** The use of implicit verbal devices comes “at a more sophisticated level” of performative identification according to Austin. Thus we use ‘still’ with the force ‘I insist that’; ‘therefore’ with the force ‘I conclude that’; ‘although’ with the force ‘I concede that’. However, it’s unclear whether these connecting particles are really signalling the force of an utterance, or the performance of an act at a meta-level, to
do with conversational moves in the framework of a discourse—so ‘although’ might indicate any one of the conversational moves of ‘indirect challenge’, ‘sub-argument concession’, ‘express reservation’, or ‘enumerate exceptions’.

(5) **Accompaniments of the utterance:** Gestures such as a wink, pointing, a shrug, a frown, a smile, etc. There are many such accompaniments; they sometimes take the place of an utterance completely (e.g. a shrug, can be an eloquent way of expressing lack of knowledge or information for answering a question). Some cultures are extremely rich in expressive gestures of this kind. Unfortunately, even though they are an important way of conveying meaning and force, it is impossible (or inappropriate) to represent gestures in writing without resorting to something like stage directions.

(6) **The circumstance of the utterance:** This is probably the broadest category discussed by Austin. In short, he states that a participant’s background knowledge is used to analyse any utterance. The example he gives is of a report by some person of a past utterance by another person: ‘it could be taken an order, not as a request’. In a way, this ability to make the act being performed ambiguous is often exploited by speakers to ‘mean more than they say’, to insinuate, to intimate, to make an innuendo, and so on. Austin sums up his list of ‘devices’ for identification in the following way:

No doubt a combination of some or all the devices mentioned above will usually, if not in the end, suffice. Thus, when we say ‘I shall’ we can make it clear that we are forecasting by adding the adverbs ‘undoubtedly’ or ‘probably’, that we are expressing an intention by adding the adverb
‘certainly’ or ‘definitely’, or that we are promising by adding the adverbial phrase ‘without fail’ or saying ‘I shall do my best to’.

Austin was troubled by the inability to identify consistently performative utterances by any grammatical criterion, but he nevertheless took the view that every performative utterance might be rephrased in the form of an explicit performative, an explicit performative verb (‘state’, ‘deny’, ‘order’, ‘suggest’, ‘promise’, etc.). So he takes a new approach. He reconsiders exactly what he means by “utterance as action” (saying something in order to do something). He defines three separate types of act that are performed by an utterance within a conversation: the performance of an act of saying something (locutionary act), an act in saying something (illocutionary act), and an act by saying something (perlocutionary act). It is the illocutionary act that has become synonymous with the speech act. This is because illocutionary acts are performed by a combination of the content of an utterance and its force, so unlike perlocutionary acts, they are relatively determinate and circumscribed in nature.

Austin’s solution to the impasse that he reached over the identification of illocutionary acts in their implicit form which refer to implicit performative utterances/acts, was to try to categorise, according to their effects, the illocutionary verbs found in their explicit form. He displayed a certain amount of trepidation when distinguishing different classes, or families, of speech act, and admitted to being far from happy about the end result, believing that he may well have cross-classified some of them. He has been criticised for being somewhat unsystematic in his approach. The following is a brief summary of Austin’s five classes of illocutionary acts:

Exercitives: “...an assertion of influence or exercising of power...”. Examples of these are: ‘order’, ‘warn’, ‘bequeath’, ‘advise’, ‘nominate’, etc.


He concludes that utterances in general have the following related features: (1) felicity conditions; (1a) illocutionary force; (2) truth value; and (2a) locutionary meaning (sense and reference). The final analysis he makes of what is needed to advance the development of speech act theory is summed up as follows:

The total speech act in the total speech situation is the only actual phenomenon which, in the last resort, we are engaged in elucidating. (Austin 1975)

His work is the foundation of most subsequent theories of speech acts. Searle’s influential work (1969, 1979) largely followed on where Austin’s left off. Much of Searle’s earlier work had been an attempt to systematise and formalise Austin’s main
ideas. Austin’s main thrust of argument had been to show that two hitherto unrelated and apparently non-complementary strands of the philosophy of language were necessarily related in a general theory of speech acts (the performative-constative antithesis). Searle also subscribed to this idea (indeed much of Searle’s work is very similar to Austin’s). His basic assumption is that the speech act is the minimal unit of linguistic communication and he appeals to what he calls the principle of expressibility (which states that “whatever can be meant can be said”) to justify his treatment and classification of illocutionary verbs as equivalent to an analysis of illocutionary acts. He claims that the principle:

...enables us to equate rules for performing speech acts with rules for uttering certain linguistic elements, since for any possible speech act there is a possible linguistic element the meaning of which (given the context of utterance) is sufficient to determine that its literal utterance is a performance of precisely that speech act. To study the speech acts of promising or apologising we need only study sentences whose literal and correct utterance would constitute making a promise or issuing an apology (1971).

Searle differed from Austin in that he was not happy with the distinction Austin made between locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. He especially disliked, and indeed rejected altogether, the distinction between the first two of these three (1969). He saw locutionary acts as constitutive of illocutionary acts, and therefore advocated a rigorous and systematic investigation of the latter alone. Searle had the following observation to make on the point:
To perform illocutionary acts is to engage in a rule-governed form of behaviour (1971). In order to ask a question, make a statement, make a promise, etc., there are a number of “necessary and sufficient” conditions which, when fulfilled, constitute the performing of that illocutionary act.

Here, Searle points out the crucial difference between constitutive and regulative rules. Regulative rules are those that regulate activities that are already in use. For example, traffic rules and regulations control the activity of driving, dieting controls the activity of eating, etiquette controls social interaction, and so on. On the other hand, constitutive rules make up part of the activity and cannot be separated from it (e.g. you can still drive a car without following the traffic regulations but you cannot drive a car without switching on the engine, pressing in the clutch, putting it in gear, pressing the accelerator, etc.). Examples of a constitutive rule in chess would be of the form “a checkmate is made if the king is attacked in such a way that no move will leave it unattacked” (1971). You cannot play chess without this rule (and others like it) – the rules are the game; thus the rules concerning chess define or constitute chess itself. The importance of ascribing constitutive rules to illocutionary acts is that Searle can make the step of saying that the rules which govern an illocutionary verb are constitutive of their analogous illocutionary act.

Different utterances can often have features in common with each other:

‘Jason will drive the car.’
‘Jason, drive the car!’

Jason: ‘I will drive the car.’

‘Will Jason drive the car?’

These perform different illocutionary acts: the first would be in general an assertion, the second an order or request (more commonly indicated by the inclusion of preverbal ‘please’, the third a promise or expression of intention, and the fourth a question.

However, along with each different act, there is an element or propositional act that is common to all of the four illocutionary acts given above. In each utterance, the speaker refers to a certain person called Jason, and predicates the act of driving a car (in the third case, of course, Jason performs an act of self-reference). In none of the utterances is this the only act that the speaker performs, but in every case it plays a part. Searle calls this common element the (propositional) content of the illocutionary act. So far, Searle’s theory matches up well to Austin’s. They come to the same conclusion that the illocutionary act is given by the illocutionary force and the content of an utterance, with the force in effect working as a function on the content.

2.5 Searle’s version of speech act theory

Searle was Austin’s student and one of Searle’s (1969) major contributions to speech act theory is his analysis of general presuppositions for successful speech acts. The result of Searle’s analysis is formulated in four general rules: propositional content rule, preparatory rule, sincerity rule and essential rule, which are rules that the speaker must comply to if he wants to succeed with his speech act. Another important contribution from Searle (1979) is his classification of speech acts into five classes:
assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declaratives. Searle used twelve dimensions to classify speech acts but the three most important dimensions are:

- illocutionary point;
- direction of fit;
- expressed psychological state of the speaker.

1. **Illocutionary point** determines the main pragmatic function of the speech act.

   According to Searle, there are exactly five illocutionary points which correspond to the five different classes of speech acts. Searle makes a distinction between the illocutionary force (F) of the speech act and its propositional content (p) which together can be symbolised as F(p). The aim is to classify different illocutionary forces (F) (pragmatic functions) of language.

2. The **direction-of-fit** shows how the propositional content (p) of the speech act can be related to the world. Searle (1979) is not very specific about what he means by the concept of world, but the description that he makes of the world shows, that he is working with a one-world model. The speaker (actor) is confronted with an external world which is constituted of objects and states of affairs and is where the listener is also placed. The speaker can, with the help of the information content (p) of the speech act in the direction from word-to-world, describe the existence of certain states of affairs, or in the direction world-to-word express which state of affairs that he wants to bring about or see brought about. In some speech acts like assertions, the direction-of-fit is
word-to-world, but when it comes to other types of speech acts it is the other way around, the direction-of-fit is world-to-word like in directives and commissives.

3. The third major dimension in Searle’s classification is the **expressed psychological state** of the speaker. When a speaker performs a speech-act, the speaker expresses an attitude to the propositional content e.g. when the speaker performs an assertion, (s)he expresses a belief.

Searle’s analysis of speech acts can be illustrated by the following communication model:

a) The speaker performs a speech act in an action context, a speech act which is expressed with the help of a message and is directed to a listener. The message is expressed in a language and is constituted by an information content and an action aspect. The speaker expresses an illocutionary point with the help of the message.

b) The direction-of-fit between the message and the world shows how the information content of the speech act can be related to the world. The direction-of-fit can either be word-to-world (like in assertions) or world-to-word (like in directives and commissives). When it comes to the direction-of-fit between the message and the world, there is a double direction-of-fit both word-to-world and world-to-word.

c) The speaker expresses a psychological state. When a speaker performs a speech-act, the speaker expresses some attitude (intention, desire, belief, etc.) to the information content of the speech act.
With the three dimensions, illocutionary point, direction-of-fit and expressed psychological state, Searle has classified speech acts as Assertives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives and Declaratives. Each of these are explained below.

2.5.1 Searle’s classification of speech-acts

1. Assertives

The illocutionary point of assertives is to commit the speaker of the truth to the expressed proposition. The direction-of-fit is word-to-world and the expressed psychological state is a belief, e.g. the teacher says, “I assert to you that the window is open”.

2. Directives

The illocutionary point of directives is an attempt from the speaker to make the listener to perform an act. The direction-of-fit is world-to-word and the expressed psychological state is a wish or desire, e.g. the teacher says ”I request that you open the window”.

3. Commissives

The illocutionary point of commissives is that the speaker commits himself to perform an act. The direction-of-fit is world-to-word and the expressed psychological state is an intention, e.g. the teacher says “I promise to open the window”. Searle would have liked to have directives and commissives in the same class because they have the same direction-of-fit, but according to Searle, it is not possible to assimilate the classes because they do not have the same illocutionary point.

4. Expressives

The illocutionary point of expressives is to express the speakers psychological state about the state of affairs presented in the propositional content of the speech act. In the
expressive class, there is no direction-of-fit. If the teacher says “I wish the window was open”, it is an example of an expressive speech act.

5. Declaratives

The illocutionary point of declaratives is that their successful performance guarantees that the propositional content of the speech act corresponds to the world. Declarations bring about alteration in the status of the referred objects. This feature distinguishes them from other classes. This also means that the direction-of-fit of the declarations is both word-to-world and world-to-word at the same time. Most of the declarations also require an extra-linguistic institution to be successfully performed, e.g. the teacher can say to a student “I declare you to be the class monitor”. There is no expressed psychological state in declarations.

So, to sum up, Searle discusses the question ‘what is an illocutionary act?’, and comes up with the following definition: an illocutionary act is composed of an illocutionary force, working upon a propositional content, and that the rules governing illocutionary force are constitutive of their corresponding illocutionary acts. This has important implications for Austin’s original idea of felicity conditions; it leads to the conclusion that they may not just be ways in which illocutionary acts can fail or go wrong, but they might actually be definitive or constitutive of different illocutionary acts. By listing and categorising the felicity conditions of utterances, one would be able to list and categorise different illocutionary acts.

Searle gives the example of the felicity conditions necessary for the illocutionary verb ‘promise’ to be ‘legal’ or ‘felicitous’ as follows (from Levinson 1983):

(1) The speaker said he would perform a future action.
(2) He intends to do it.
(3) He believes he can do it.
(4) He thinks he would not do it anyway in the normal course of events.
(5) He thinks the addressee wants him to do it (rather than not to do it).
(6) He intends to place himself under an obligation to do it by uttering the sentence ‘I promise...’.
(7) Both speaker and addressee comprehend the sentence.
(8) They are both conscious, normal human beings.
(9) They are both in normal circumstances – e.g. not acting in a play [or telling jokes].
(10) The utterance contains some illocutionary force-indicating device (IFID) which is only properly uttered if all the appropriate conditions pertain.

Number (1) is what Searle called the propositional content condition, (2) is the sincerity condition, (3), (4) & (5) are the preparatory conditions, and (6) is the essential condition.

Numbers (7) to (10) are general to all speech acts. Numbers (1) to (6) can be said to be the specific preconditions necessary for, and constitutive of, the act of promising.

The most obvious device for indicating the illocutionary force (the Illocutionary Force Indicating Device, or IFID) is an expression of the type shown in (1), a slot for a verb that explicitly names the illocutionary act being performed. Such a verb can be called a performative verb.

1. …, ‘ said Jason. ‘…. I am asking you to use your power to help my husband and not to use it against him.’.
2. shouted Mr. Albert. ‘…. I promise that I have not heard anything about Charles.’

3. “Gentlemen,” I answered

In the (1, 2, and 3), ‘asking’, ‘promise’ and ‘answered’ would be the performative verb and, if stated, would be very clear IFIDs.

Felicity conditions are recast as components of illocutionary force; Searle (1969) classifies these conditions into four logical types, which together make up illocutionary force:

1. **Propositional content conditions**: These are restrictions that the felicitous performance of an illocutionary act places on the content of an utterance (such as tense or subject). For example, to make a promise, the content must predicate a future action; you cannot say something like ‘I promise to have done it by last week’. To apologise, it is necessary that the speaker apologises for his own actions or for some occurrence for which he is responsible.

2. **Preparatory conditions**: These are the presuppositions that the speaker makes about the illocutionary act. For example, if he promises to do something for a certain addressee, it must presuppose that it be in the addressee’s best interests for him to do so; if he apologises for some action, it presupposes that this action must be reprehensible in some way.

3. **Sincerity conditions**: Illocutionary acts typically express psychological states of mind, thus when I assert X, I express my belief in X; when I promise to do X, I express my intention to do X; and when I request, or command, or order that X be done, I express my desire or want that X be done. Violations of this condition
consist of my expressing a psychological state of mind that I do not possess (i.e. lying, or giving a false impression) – for example when I assert without belief, promise without the intention to perform the action, or command without the desire, want, or need for the action to be performed.

4. **Essential condition**: This specifies what uttering a certain IFID ‘counts as’. For example, a ‘request’ counts as an attempt to get an addressee to perform an action, a ‘promise’ counts as placing an obligation on the speaker to do an action, and so on. The other elements of illocutionary force are further specifications and modifications of the illocutionary point, but the basic component of illocutionary force is illocutionary point.

**Degree of strength of the illocutionary point**: Often, different illocutionary acts are performed simply by varying the degree of strength of the illocutionary point. For example, if I order someone to do something, this act is stronger than if I request that he do it.

**Mode of achievement**: Some illocutionary acts require special conditions to obtain before their illocutionary point can be achieved. For example, in order to testify, a person has to have the authority to do so by being sworn in as a witness; when he makes an assertion, his status as a witness makes it count as a testimony.

**Degree of strength of the sincerity conditions**: This is analogous to the degree of strength of the illocutionary point. In the same way, different illocutionary acts can be performed by varying the degree of strength of the sincerity conditions. Thus, if I make a
request, I express my wish or desire that the addressee carry out some act; the degree of
desire is not as strong as if I were to beg, beseech or implore.

Following on from the idea that illocutionary point gives the purpose of a certain
type of illocutionary act, Searle and Vanderveken classify the different types of
illocutionary act according to whether the utterance commits the speaker to the way the
world is already, or to the way in which he desires that the world be changed. Examples
of the former are assertions, agreements, denials, etc. – these are called the words-to-
world fit, or the descriptive type, because in judging the success of the speech act we
determine whether the words fit the way the world actually is. Examples of the latter are
such acts as commands, requests, promises, etc. – these are called the world-to-words fit,
or the prescriptive type, because in performing such speech acts we are expressing a
wish that the world be made to fit the words. For example:

Eg.1. ‘The door is closed.’ (Words-to-world fit)

Eg.2. ‘Close the door.’ (World-to-words fit)

Searle also recognized the existence of indirect speech acts. Illocutionary acts
are realized through performatives, conventional forms and indirect acts. The following
examples simplify the otherwise complexly discussed act called the indirect speech act.

- **Performatives**: I order you to leave the room.

- Other **conventional forms**: Leave the room.

- **Indirect** illocutionary acts: You'd better leave the room. If I were you, I'd
leave the room. If you know what's good for you, you'll leave the room. I'd
say it was in your best interests to leave the room. I'd better not see you in this room the next time I turn around.

The illocutionary force of an utterance corresponds to its intended meaning. When the locutionary and illocutionary force of an utterance (i.e., its literal and intended meaning) are the same, the result is termed a direct speech act; when an utterance's locutionary and illocutionary force are different (as was the case in all but the first example), the result is termed an indirect speech act (Searle, 1985)

Austin and much ordinary language philosophy emphasized the social and pragmatic dimensions of language use. While Austin offered new tools for describing the complex structure of speech acts and classifying them, he embraced a broadly social conventionalist view according to which illocutionary acts are constituted by social and institutional rules.

2.5.2 Indirect Speech Acts and Politeness Theory

Studies of politeness have spawned a considerable interest in naturalistic studies of speech interaction, crosscultural comparisons of indirection strategies, and intercultural communication. Most theories of indirect speech acts barely touch on the reasons for which speakers use indirect rather than direct forms, nor do they seek an explanation for which particular indirect forms will be used under which conditions. It takes little reflection, however, to notice that in most cases, some notion of politeness plays a role. Brown & Levinson (1987) include extensive investigations of how models of politeness can yield answers to these interesting questions. They assume—following Lakoff (1977)—that a fundamental rule of politeness (deriving from a need to preserve addressee’s “face”) is: Don’t impose.
Requests are, by definition, impositions, and the clash that they present with the rule of politeness is in need of resolution. The direct imposition can be ameliorated by avoiding a direct demand and instead asking whether the addressee is willing to or capable of carrying out the act. This gives the addressee the technical option of not carrying out the implied request without losing face. Hence Would you pass the salt? or Can you pass the salt? are more polite than Pass the salt! A rather similar account is offered by Leech (1976).

2.6 Grice on Speech Acts

In 1957, Grice published a seminal paper, in which he did three things: first, he drew a contrast between “natural” and “non-natural” meaning. Secondly, he offered a definition of the novel concept of speaker’s meaning. Thirdly, he sketched an entire framework within which human communication is seen as a cooperative and rational activity in which the task of the addressee is to infer the speaker’s meaning on the basis of his utterance, in accordance with a few principles of rational cooperation. In so doing, Grice took a major step towards what Sperber and Wilson (1986) call an “inferential model” of human communication.

Grice’s Cooperative Principle is an assumed basic concept in pragmatics. Along with Speech Act Theory (e.g. Austin 1962 and Searle 1969), Grice’s work on the Cooperative Principle initiated the current interest in pragmatics, and led to its development as a separate discipline within linguistics, and as such it is discussed by most textbooks in the area, and often cited in academic papers within pragmatics and associated disciplines.
Grice is concerned with the distinction between saying and meaning. How do speakers know how to generate these implicit meanings, and how can they assume that their addressees will reliably understand their intended meaning? His aim is to discover the mechanism behind this process.

Eg.1  Jason asks - Is there another bottle of juice?
I’m going to the supermarket in ten minutes.

In the above example, a competent speaker of English would have little trouble inferring the meaning that there is no juice at the moment, but that some will be bought from the supermarket shortly.

Grice posits the Cooperative Principle and its attendant four maxims as a way of explaining this implication process: the Cooperative Principle.

“Make your contribution such as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” Grice (1975)

Table 3 - The Maxims - Grice (1975)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Make your contribution as informative as is required</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Do not say what you believe to be false.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.</td>
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In his famous 1967 William James Lectures, Grice argued that what enables the hearer to infer the speaker’s meaning on the basis of his utterance is that he is guided by the expectation that all utterances meet what he called the “Cooperative Principle” and a set of nine maxims or norms organized into four main categories which, by reference to Kant, he labeled maxims of Quantity (informativeness), Quality (truthfulness), Relation (relevance) and Manner (clarity). Grice’s normative principles reflect his assumption that communication is basically a rational and cooperative enterprise.

He suggests that there is an accepted way of speaking which we all accept as standard behaviour. When we produce or hear an utterance, we assume that it will generally be true, have the right amount of information, be relevant, and will be couched in understandable terms. If an utterance does not appear to conform to this model (e.g. B’s utterance in (1) above), then we do not assume that the utterance is nonsense; rather, we assume that an appropriate meaning is there to be inferred. In Grice’s terms, a maxim has been flouted, and an implicature generated. Without such an assumption, it would not be worth a co-interactant investing the effort needed to interpret an indirect speech act.
Grice’s (1967/1975) another main contribution to the development of an inferential model of communication was his concept of conversational implicatures, which he introduced as “a term of art.” In “Logic and Conversation” Grice coins the term “implicature” for what a speaker means but does not say.

- Eg. Suppose that Jason asks Peyton whether she is going out and Peyton replies: “It’s dark.” For Peyton’s utterance about the darkness to constitute a response to Jason’s question about whether Peyton is going out, additional assumptions are required, such as, for example, that Peyton does not like going out when it is dark which, together with Peyton’s response, entails that she is not going out. Alternatively, if Jason were to combine Peyton’s utterance with the contrary assumption that she enjoys going out even if it is dark to oblige him, then Jason could infer that Peyton is going out. Either way, one such additional assumption is required for Jason to derive a response to his question from Peyton’s explicit answer.

Grice’s approach to communication, based on the Cooperative Principle and the maxims, offers a framework for explaining how, from Peyton’s utterance, Jason can retrieve an implicit answer to his question by supplying some additional tacit assumption. Jason must be aware that Peyton’s utterance is not a direct answer to his question. Assuming that Peyton does not violate or “flout” the maxim of relevance, she must have intended Jason to supply the assumption that e.g., she does not enjoy going out when it turns dark, and to infer that she is not going out from her explicit utterance. Grice called the additional assumption and the conclusion “conversational” implicatures. In other
words, Grice’s conversational implicatures are required to enable a hearer to reconcile a
speaker’s utterance with his assumption that the speaker conforms to the Principle of
Cooperation. Grice (1989) insisted that “the presence of a conversational implicature
must be capable of being worked out; for even if it can in fact be intuitively grasped,
unless the intuition is replaceable by an argument, the implicature (if present at all) will
not count as a conversational implicature.” He further distinguished the so called
“generalized” conversational implicatures, which are generated so to speak “by default,”
from the so-called “particularized” conversational implicatures, whose generation
depends on special features of the context of utterance.

Grice proposes a general Cooperative Principle and specific “maxims”—of quality,
quantity, relation (relevance), and manner, as he calls them—to account for the rationale
and success of conversational implicatures. However, it is arguable that being
cooperative simply consists in being truthful and relevant, hence there is no need for four
separate maxims. For example, observing the maxim of quantity is just being relevantly
informative. Also, it seems that the maxims might better be thought of as presumptions,
for it is on the presumption that the speaker is being truthful and relevant that the hearer
figures out what the speaker means over and above what he is saying.

Grice’s philosophical purpose, beyond providing the framework for an account of
rational cooperation in conversation, is to enforce a distinction between word meaning
and speaker meaning in connection with certain words of special interest to philosophers,
such as “know,” “seem,” “good,” “voluntary,” and logical connectives like “if” and “or.”
His aim is to show that with such a distinction enforced, there is no need to impute to
word meaning features that are really tied to use, so that analyses of word meanings can
avoid needless commitments to ambiguity and other undue complications. For example, it might seem that the word “or” has both an inclusive and an exclusive sense, but the alleged exclusive sense can be explained away in Gricean terms.

- Eg. If someone asks you “where’s the raincoat” and you reply, “It’s with my umbrella or in the car”, your words do not imply that it is not in both places (your umbrella could be in the car), but you are implying that it is in one place or the other and not both—and that you don’t know where.

2.6.1 Conversational Implicature

Conversational implicature is actually a kind of indirect speech act, a special case of performing one illocutionary act by way of performing another.

- Eg. There’s some juice in the fridge.

The guests are coming.

In uttering ‘There’s some juice in the fridge’ you not only tell someone where the juice is but also suggest that they help themselves to some. Similarly, you might utter ‘The guests are coming’ not only to inform your folks that the guests are coming but also to warn them to curtail their boisterous and silly talk.

The direct illocutionary act need not be a statement, as in the following example. You might directly ask a question

- Eg. Do you know that you just got a pink slip? - to inform someone indirectly that he just got fired.

The notion of saying is needed for describing three kinds of cases: where the speaker means what he says and something else as well (implicature and indirect speech acts
generally), where the speaker says one thing and means something else instead, and where the speaker says something and doesn’t mean anything. The notion of what is said is needed for contrast with what is implicated opposed to conversational implicature, and it is relevant to explaining what it is for an utterance to be literal, since in that case what is meant is identical to what is said. The notion of what is said is not as straightforward as it might seem, and lately some philosophers have suggested that it is more comprehensive than either Austin or Grice supposed.

Saying isn’t just a matter of meaning what one’s words mean. As Austin defines it, the locutionary act is the act of using words, “as belonging to a certain vocabulary … and as conforming to a certain grammar, … with a certain more or less definite sense and reference.” And although what is said is, according to Grice, “closely related to the conventional meaning of the … sentence … uttered,” it is not identical to conventional meaning because there can be ambiguity or context-dependent reference. Usually, only one conventional (linguistic) meaning is operative in a given utterance, and linguistic meaning does not determine what the words ‘she’, ‘this’, and ‘now’ are used to refer to. If someone utters, “She wants this book ,” he is saying that a certain woman wants a certain book, even though the words do not specify which woman and which book. So not just linguistic knowledge but (salient) contextual information can play a role in determining what is said. Nevertheless, Grice gives the impression that the distinction between what is said and what is implicated is exhaustive. One problem is that irony, metaphor, and other nonliteral utterances do not seem to be cases of implicature, in as much as they are cases of saying one thing and meaning something else. There are two
other kinds of cases to be considered, which were overlooked by Grice and have come to the fore only recently.

Lately, it has been observed that there are many sentences whose standard uses are not strictly determined by their meanings but are not implicatures or figurative uses either.

- Eg. If your child comes crying to you with a minor injury and you assure him, ‘You’re not going to die.’
  you do not mean that he will never die (that is false and irrelevant) but merely that he won’t die from that injury. And if someone wants you to join them for dinner and you say, ‘I’ve already eaten’, you do not mean you ate at some previous time (that is obviously true but irrelevant) but merely that you’ve had dinner that evening. In both cases you do not mean precisely what you are saying but something more specific. On the other hand, what you do mean isn’t an implicature either.

Grice’s influential articles (1957, 1967), while not dealing directly with the problems that occupied Austin, nevertheless have had a profound influence on speech act theory. In the earlier of these papers, Grice promulgated the idea that ordinary communication takes place not directly by means of convention, but by virtue of a speaker’s evincing certain intentions and getting his or her audience to recognize those intentions (and to recognize that it was the speaker’s intention to secure this recognition). This holds, Grice suggested, both for speech and for other sorts of intentional communicative acts. In his view, the utterance is not in itself communicative, but only provides clues to the intentions of the speaker.
2.7 Habermas Version of Speech Act Theory (Formal Pragmatics)

Habermas is a language philosopher and sociologist who developed speech act theory into a theory of formal pragmatics. Habermas (1979) claims that the main purpose of formal pragmatics is to analyse universal presuppositions for successful communication. The objective of formal pragmatics is “an attempt at rationally reconstructing universal and necessary presuppositions and rules of speech actions oriented to reaching understanding” (Habermas, 1984, p. 138). The universal rules behind formal pragmatics are that a speaker that performs a speech act, and who is oriented towards mutual understanding, must raise universal validity claims, and presuppose that these validity claims will be accepted by the listener. Successful communication implies that the listener must both comprehend and accept the speech act, i.e. the speaker and the listener must agree about the speech act.

Habermas claims that the speech act succeeds if the listener accepts the speech act and enters into the intended relationship, a communicative intent that is expressed with the help of the illocutionary component of the speech act. If the speech act is accepted, an actor relationship is created that implies obligations which regulate the social interaction. Habermas (1984) has also presented a classification of speech acts which is based on a critique of the classification of Searle (see section 4.1 below). The classification consists of four classes of speech acts:

1. constative
2. expressive
3. regulative
4. imperative

The classification is based on three dimensions:

- an ontology of three worlds
- claims of validity and power
- the pragmatic language functions of Bühler

An ontology of three worlds implies that the world can be divided into a subjective (internal) world that is constituted by the feelings, beliefs, desires, experiences and intentions of the actors, and a common social world that is constituted by norms, actor relationships, institutions and to which the actors belong themselves (part of the external world), and an objective world of objects and state of affairs (part of the external world).

Habermas contends that a speaker who performs a speech act at the same time raises four validity claims: comprehensibility, truth, sincerity and rightness which must be recognised by the listener if the speech act is to succeed. The claim for comprehensibility is a presupposition for the recognition of the other three claims: the truth claim which is related to objective world, the sincerity claim which is related to the subjective world and the claim for rightness which is related to the social world. It is the three claims: truth, sincerity and rightness claims that are used for the classification of speech acts. Habermas also uses the claim for power, which is not a validity claim, in the classification.

The third dimension that is used in the classification is the pragmatic language functions defined by Bühler (1934). Bühler defined an organic model of language that serves three different and interconnected functions. The function of representation
(symbol) is to make references to objects and state of affairs. The expressive (symptom) function is used to express the speaker’s intentions, feelings, etc. The appellative (signal) function is focused on the listener that the speaker wants to influence. According to Habermas, it is these pragmatic functions that makes it possible to relate the propositional content of the speech act to the three worlds.

2.7.1 Communication model that illustrates Habermas’ analysis of speech acts

The model should be interpreted like this:

1. Habermas divides the appellative (signal) function into two: a regulative and an imperative pragmatic function:

   a) The speaker performs a speech act in an action context, a speech act which is expressed in a message. The speaker has an illocutionary aim with the speech act which is to create an actor relationship with the listener.

   b) When the speech act is performed, the propositional information content of the speech act is related to the three worlds with the help of the pragmatic functions. The lines between the message and the three worlds illustrate these relations. When a specific type of speech act is performed, one of the world-relations is stressed. World relation 1 is stressed with the assertives, world relation 2 with the expressives, world relation 3 with the regulatives and world relation 4 with the imperatives.

   c) If the speech act is to succeed, the listener must both comprehend and accept the speech act. To make this happen, the listener must first comprehend the speech act but the listener must also accept the speech act as valid. The listener
has fully understood the speech act when he knows under which conditions the speech act is acceptable. Knowing these conditions implies that the listener is given the opportunity to control and criticise the speech act based on the validity claims comprehensibility, truth, sincerity and rightness. The acceptance of the speech act is based on the good reasons that the speaker can provide in order to redeem the validity claims in a discourse, or else on a trustworthy warranty that (s)he could provide such reasons if it is necessary (Habermas, 1986).

If we compare the models of Habermas and Searle, we can see that Habermas makes quite a different interpretation of speech act theory compared to Searle. Habermas claims that a speech act is successful if an actor relationship is established that is based on mutual understanding (mutual knowledge); an actor relationship that co-ordinates subsequent actions. For example, if the student accepts the speech act ”I request that you open the window”, an actor relationship is created which governs the material act of opening the window. This means that Habermas analyses the listener’s motivation to accept the speech act on the basis of the illocutionary force of speech acts which is constituted by the mutual recognition of validity claims. Searle is not analysing the reasons and motives that would make the listener accept the speech act and join the interaction.

2.7.2 Habermas’ Classification of Speech Acts

With the three dimensions of the communication model which constitute different worlds, validity claims and pragmatic functions, Habermas has classified speech acts into the following four classes:
1) **Constatives**

Habermas defines the class of constatives by relating these speech acts to the objective world, the claim for truth, and the representation (symbol) function. The speech acts in this class are used to present states of affairs, e.g. the teacher says “I assert to you that the window is open”. If the listener chooses to criticise the speech act, it implies a criticism of the claim for truth that has been raised by the speaker. The listener may be motivated to accept the claim for truth if he realises that the speaker has good reasons to claim that his proposition is true.

2) **Expressives**

Habermas defines the class of expressives by relating these speech acts to the subjective world, the claim for sincerity and the expressive function of Bühler. The speech acts in this class are used to present something from the subjective world of the speaker, e.g. the teacher says ”I wish the window was open”. If the listener chooses to criticise the speech act, it means a criticism of the speaker’s sincerity. The listener can be motivated to accept the claim for sincerity raised by the speaker if the speaker can assure the listener that he really means what he says. If the listener still has doubts about the speaker’s sincerity, the speaker can only show his sincerity in the consistency of his subsequent actions.

3) **Regulatives**

Habermas defines the class of regulatives by relating these speech acts to the social world, the claim for rightness and the appellative (signal) function. The speech acts in this class are used to regulate the interaction between the actors in the social world, e.g. the teacher says ”I request that you open the window”. If the listener chooses to criticise the speech act, it is a contest about the normative rightness of the speech act. The listener
may be motivated to accept the claim for rightness raised by the speaker if the listener can recognise the normative context which makes the speech act valid.

4) Imperatives

Habermas defines the class of imperatives (sheer imperative) by relating these speech acts to the objective world, a claim for power and the appellative (signal) function of Bühler. The speech acts in this class are used by the speaker to refer to a desired state in such a way that the listener would bring about that state, e.g. the teacher says “Open the window!” According to Habermas, imperatives can only be criticised from the aspect of conditions for satisfaction i.e. whether the action demanded can be carried out. However, it is not the recognition of the conditions of satisfaction that motivates the listener to accept the speech act. What motivates the listener to join the interaction is that the speaker can force the listener to interact, e.g. with the help of sanctions.

Habermas’ interest in speech act theory and the reason he developed the formal pragmatic theory is due to his aim of analysing the importance of human communication for social interaction. It is this analysis Habermas (1984) carries through in the theory of communicative action. This implies that to fully understand formal pragmatics and the difference between Habermas’ version of speech act theory on one side, and Austin and Searles on the other, one has to be aware of some basic concepts used in the communicative action theory.

In the theory of communicative action, social interaction is defined as action contexts where two or more social actors co-ordinate their material (instrumental) actions and speech acts to carry out their plans of action. The main focus of Habermas is to analyse the mechanisms that make people co-ordinate their actions. The teacher
requesting that the student open the window is a very simple example of social interaction. The teacher’s objective is to get some fresh air into the classroom, the plan of action is that the student should perform the material action to open the window, the teacher wants to carry out the plan by co-ordinating her actions with the student, and the means of this co-ordination is the speech act.

According to Habermas, social interaction can be co-ordinated by speech acts, money or force. The distinction between two types of social interaction is important for Habermas’ analysis of social interaction: communicative action (the means of co-ordinating the action plan(s) are foremost speech acts) and strategic action (the means of co-ordination the action plan(s) are foremost money or force). In communicative action, the actors are carrying out their plans of action with a mutual understanding. This implies that speech acts are most important for the co-ordination of the social interaction. For example, if the student comprehends and accepts the request as valid and also opens the window, the social interaction can be characterised as communicative action. Notice that communicative action includes both the speech act and the material act. In communicative action, the actors are performing actions and strive at private goals but they can only do it in such a way that they do not break the mutual consensus and the legitimately created social relationship between the actors.

If the teacher makes the student open the window without mutual understanding, it is an example of strategic action. The teacher could threaten the student into opening the window as a means of co-coordinating the social action. In strategic action, the actors strive at their own private goals without restraint. Actor relationships and mutual
understanding are of secondary interest. The only thing that matters is how the main actor (e.g. the teacher) can use other people (e.g. the student) to realise her own private goals.

The distinction between strategic and communicative action is important for the development of formal pragmatics because it shows that a speech act can both be used for reaching mutual understanding and with a strategic intent.

Habermas has also criticised Austin because he did not discover this important distinction. Habermas (1984, p. 295) claims that:

“Austin did not keep these two cases separate as different type of interaction, because he was inclined to identity acts of communication, that is, acts of reaching understanding, with the actions coordinated by speech-acts. He didn’t see that acts of communication or speech acts function as a coordinating mechanism for other actions. “Acts of communication” should not be confused with what I have introduced as communicative action.”

### 2.8 Critical Appraisal of Pragmatics and Speech Act

Speech-act theory adopts a principle of literality: it identifies speaker-meaning with sentence-meaning whenever possible. In that view, the speaker primarily attempts to perform the literal individual illocution expressed by the sentence that he uses when such an act is then performable. Natural languages offer rich linguistic means to express forces. Many scholars forget such means, either ignoring force in their semantics or multiplying unnecessarily literal forces. Grice and Searle do not multiply without reason sentence-meaning and semantic ambiguity. They appeal as much as possible to conversational maxims and background to explicate non-literal speaker-meaning. Thus,
declarative, interrogative and optative sentences like “I desire your help”, “If only you
would help me” and “Could you help me?” that are often used to make indirect requests
of help, respectively express literal assertions, questions and wishes in general semantics.
As Grice (1975) pointed out, most non-literal illocutions are cancellable. So are such
recurrent indirect requests that are generalized conversational implicatures in Grice’s
terminology. Most sentences can be used literally. Given new developments, general
semantics contains a richer ideography with greater expressive powers. It can better
translate sentences of natural language and assign to expressed illocutions a finer
canonical form, clarifying their felicity-conditions. In non-literal utterances, speakers
express the literal illocution, but they mean to perform other speech-acts. Otherwise,
there would be too many senses and forces and no theory of linguistic meaning would be
possible. Speakers using illocutionarily inconsistent sentences like “I am not myself
today” know by virtue of competence that the literal illocution is self-defeating. They do
not mean what they say. General semantics cannot explicate what they non-literally
mean. But it allows for a systematic unified pragmatic construction of non-literal
speaker-meaning from sentence-meaning.

By virtue of its logical form, each attempted illocution commits the speaker to
many other acts. A speech-act strongly commits the speaker to another when he could not
then perform that act without performing the other. All predictions contain an assertion
but not conversely. Assertions about the past are not predictions. Whoever means to
perform an illocution act attempts to perform others with less success conditions. But,
speakers are also committed to performing stronger illocutions. Whoever replies to an
assertion by saying the contrary does more than assert the negation of its content. He then
contradicts the previous speaker. General semantics can now explicate by simple
generation such commitments to stronger illocutions. In contexts where certain
propositional, preparatory or sincerity conditions are fulfilled, the successful literal
illocution simply generates illocutions with a stronger force. In other contexts, there is no
such illocutionary generation. As Searle pointed out, speakers are also weakly committed
to illocutions that they do not overtly perform. Whoever agrees to help everybody is
committed to agreeing to help you even if he did not make any reference to you. No one
can literally say “I refuse to help you and I agree to help everybody”. Attempts can fail.
But, whoever attempts to perform an illocution is weakly committed to that illocution. A
speaker is weakly committed to an illocution in a context when he could then perform
that illocution at any moment that is compatible as regards that agent with the moment of
utterance of that context. All the laws governing weak illocutionary commitment follow
from this definition.

Speaker-meaning is often different from sentence-meaning in dialogue. Not only
do interlocutors speak non-literally and non-seriously, but they also share forms of life
and attempt by verbal interactions to achieve common goals and to perform actions
together. As Wittgenstein (1958) stated, sentences are instruments that have roles and
functions in language-games. He says: “Here the term “language-game” is meant to bring
into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, of a form of
life” (Wittgenstein 1958).

In Grice’s approach, in order to understand non-literal illocutions, the hearer must
first determine the literal illocution and understand that the speaker cannot just mean to
perform that speech-act if he respects conversational maxims, given mutually known
facts of the background. In order to explicate speaker-meaning, pragmatics must add to semantics, conceived as theory of sentence-meaning, a theory of conversational maxims and an analysis of relevant facts of conversational background. An illocution is stronger than another when it has more felicity-conditions. Now, maxims apply to all kinds of utterances. In order to respect maxims, speakers must well select forces and contents. Thus, they obey the following principle: Do not command but request the hearer when all depends on his good will. Only request him to do things that you wish and that he can do. (Otherwise your directive will be defective). Do not request things that he will not do. (Otherwise your directive will be unsatisfied). Command the hearer when you are in a position of authority and you really want him to act (since a request would be too weak). Command neither more nor less than what you want. (otherwise the content of your directive will not be as strong as needed).

There are normal forms of inferences leading to attempted non-literal illocutions. Their premises contain finitely many background-facts whose existence is taken for granted by speakers. So a theoretical approach is in principle compatible with the openness of the background. Relevant facts are contents of attitudes and related to felicity-conditions. Hearers infer what speakers non-literally mean in exploiting and using conversational maxims (Grice 1975). A speaker exploits a maxim when he wants the hearer to recognize background-facts that would prevent him from respecting that maxim if his primary illocution were literal. Yet, he clearly wants to cooperate and he can respect the maxim without violating another one. Therefore, he then primarily means to perform another non-literal illocution, and he wants to communicate this. Irony and sarcasm are special cases of exploitation of the maxim of quality while indirection and
hyperbole are exploitations of the maxim of quantity. In the case of irony, speaker-meaning is in opposition with sentence-meaning. It is part of background-knowledge that literal felicity-conditions are violated and that the speaker is attempting to perform non-literal illocutions with opposite conditions. The speaker's irony is directed to components of literal force and content violating felicity-conditions. By saying “I promise to attack you” a speaker ironically threatens the hearer when the future action is obviously bad for him. His irony then concerns the preparatory condition. By saying “I thank you for your help”, a speaker ironically complains that the hearer did not help him when he is obviously not grateful but dissatisfied because he did not receive any help. The irony then relates to both the sincerity condition and the propositional content.

In the case of indirect speech-acts, speaker-meaning is an extension of sentence-meaning. The speaker relies on the fact that the literal illocution is too weak to achieve his linguistic purposes. Most often, the speaker intends to achieve another point on the propositional content, and non-literal preparatory or sincerity conditions are obviously fulfilled. So one can indirectly promise help by saying “I will help you.” When indirection is directed to propositional content, satisfaction-conditions of the literal speech-act are felicity-conditions of the indirect act. The speaker can assert what these conditions obtain. He can also ask the hearer whether they obtain. Given the background, the literal assertion is then obviously true and the literal question has or could have a positive answer. We often indirectly offer and even promise help by saying “I could help you”, “Can I help you?” (preparatory conditions of the indirect act), “I intend to help you”, (sincerity conditions), “I should help you”, “Should I help you?” (mode of achievement). In such idiomatic uses, the propositional content of the indirect illocution
is part of the literal content. An indirect speech-act is categorical whenever its non-literal felicity-conditions are part of background-knowledge. Sometimes, the speaker’s intentions depend on the hearer's answer. In such cases, the indirect speech-act is conditional. We just indirectly offer help when we ask whether the hearer is willing to receive help. Such offers are indirect promises that are conditional on the hearer's acceptance. So, speakers respect exploited maxims in speaking ironically and indirectly. Ironical illocutions have felicity-conditions compatible with background-knowledge. In the case of indirection, the speaker means to perform the literal and the indirect speech-acts. These two illocutions are together as strong as needed to achieve all his purposes.

Searle (1982) pointed out some important difficulties for theories of discourse: interlocutors often have no conversational goal; they freely change kinds and topics of dialogue; they can make unsuccessful and totally irrelevant utterances without breaking the conversation; their intentionality is collective. Moreover, the conversational background is indefinitely open and therefore not exhaustively describable. However, in any dialogue, speakers always mean to perform relevant illocutions in order to contribute to verbal exchanges such as presentations, justifications, debates, compromises and agreements which are higher-level speech-acts whose goal is conversational. The logic of discourse can analyze the logical structure and dynamics of such language-games for they are conducted according to systems of constitutive rules.

The following taxonomy postulates four conversational goals corresponding to the four different possible directions of fit between words and things. Discourses with the word-to-world direction of fit (like forecasts, interviews, accounts and interrogations) have a descriptive goal: they serve to describe how things are in the world. Discourses
with the world-to-word direction of fit (negotiations, bets, arrangements and sermons) have a deliberative goal: to deliberate about what to do in the world. Discourses with the double direction of fit (inaugurations, permits, baptisms and classifications) have a declaratory goal: they serve to do things by declarations. Finally, discourses with no direction of fit (greetings, eulogies, welcomes and protestations) have an expressive goal: they just serve to express common attitudes. Competent speakers are all able to achieve conversational goals because they have intentionality. There is a one-to-one correspondence between conversational goals and possible directions of fit because interlocutors are protagonists in dialogues. In single contexts of utterances, the speaker is active while the hearer is passive. No speaker can commit someone else to an action by his personal utterance. He can only commit himself or give a directive to another agent. So, language distinguishes two illocutionary points with the things-to-words direction of fit. When the utterance is commissive, the responsibility for changing the world lies on the speaker; when it is directive, it lies on the hearer. However, the speech-situation is entirely different in a collective deliberation. Any hearer is a potential speaker who can speak in his turn and make a contribution. Hearers can reply to speakers who give them directives and accept or refuse to commit themselves later. Often, speakers’ commitments are conditional upon future hearers’ commitments. So, there is a single conversational goal while there are two illocutionary points with the things-to-words direction of fit. Deliberations serve both to commit speakers and to attempt to convince hearers that they should carry out reciprocal actions in the world.
All forces with the same illocutionary point do not play the same role in language-use. Sometimes it is better to advise than to command. Similarly, all dialogues with the same conversational goal do not have the same function. Sometimes it is better to argue in favour of a position rather than just present it unilaterally. Discourse types impose conditions to their proper theme. A job interview must describe the professional qualification of the interviewee. Thematic conditions determine both forces and propositional contents of major illocutions. Deliberations of a jury must give a verdict. Interlocutors take for granted that preparatory conditions obtain in the background. For example, during a medical consultation, one presupposes that the consulted person has skills in medicine and the consulting speaker wants advice for his health. Finally, many discourse types require that protagonists express common attitudes. In order to exchange greetings, speakers must express courteous acknowledgements of the other’s presence upon their encountering one other. Two language-games have the same discourse type when they have the same conversational goals, the same mode of achievement and the same thematic background and sincerity conditions.

The four primitive discourse types are the simplest types with one conversational goal: description, deliberation, declaration and expression, common respectively to all descriptive, deliberative, declaratory and expressive language games. Thus, the type of negotiation has a special mode of achievement of the deliberative goal: protagonists take counsel together as how to act. The type of bargaining has an additional thematic condition: protagonists negotiate the purchase and selling of certain things. The type of peace talks has a special background condition: negotiators represent belligerent parties and are authorised to conclude peace. Finally, attempts of friendly settlements have a
special sincerity condition: negotiators express their will to come to an arrangement without animosity. Each discourse component determines a particular success-condition corresponding to a constitutive rule. Protagonists succeed in conducting a discourse of a given type during an interval of time when firstly, their theme satisfies thematic conditions of their type, secondly, they achieve the conversational goal on the theme with the required mode of achievement, thirdly, they presuppose the required background-conditions and finally express their attitudes required by the sincerity conditions. Thus, speakers bargain when they deliberate on a purchase and sale, (discursive goal and thematic conditions), they negotiate by making offers, counteroffers, acceptances or refusals of trade (mode of achievement), they take for granted that they are potential buyers and sellers (background-conditions) and they express their will to do business (sincerity conditions). Discourse types having more components than others have stronger success conditions. Thus, any negotiation is a deliberation. Bargaining sessions, peace talks and attempts at friendly settlements are negotiations.

Interlocutors must cooperate and make appropriate capital contributions at appropriate moments. By definition, discourses with a direction of fit have satisfaction conditions. As one may expect, their satisfaction depends on the satisfaction of their master illocutions. Descriptions are exact when their master assertions are true. Deliberations are respected when their master commitments are kept and their master directives followed. Declaratory discourses are satisfied when their master declarations are successful. Interlocutors can disagree and even contradict themselves. But they often argue and try to convince each other. They revise their positions or vote to make a decision. So, they sometimes come in the end to an agreement. When protagonists agree
on how things are or on what to do, their descriptions and deliberations have a happy ending. However, the theory of success requires less than felicity and good performance. Successful discourses can be bad, made in the wrong background, defective and unsatisfied.

Until now, theorists of conversation have neglected conversational goals. Many have distinguished good and bad discourses of certain kinds. But, few have recognized that dialogues are collective illocutions of higher order provided with felicity conditions. Analysts of conversation have empirically analyzed recurrent models of verbal interactions such as the rules for taking turn in any conversation. Some linguists have analyzed dialogues with a conversational goal such as argumentations, linguistic exchanges in court, job interviews, newscasts and lessons at school. Philosophers have studied the nature of scientific discourse. Logicians have studied the nature of mathematical demonstrations (proof theory). Such investigations are useful but restricted. Others have adopted a more general approach and analyzed various types of discourse. Sperber and Wilson have studied relevance. But most have ignored discursive types. There are a lot of conversation verbs, including performatives (Austin’s expositives). One can proceed to a reasoned lexical analysis of conversation verbs on the basis of my typology. There is no one-to-one correspondence between discursive types and conversation verbs just as there is no one-to-one correspondence between illocutionary forces and performative verbs. Verbs like “inform” and “bet” name both a discourse type and an individual illocutionary act that is capital in such discourses. Conversation verbs such as “reply” and “conclude” name parts of discourse without a proper conversational goal. A reply can be of any goal. Certain conversation verbs like “debate” and “argue”
are ambiguous. Argumentations in favour or against a certain thesis are descriptive, argumentations in favour or against a certain course of action are deliberative. When a conversation verb is ambiguous, discursive types corresponding to it share certain features. Protagonists who argue try to convince each other. This is a special mode of achievement of argumentations. Dialogues with a conversational goal are joint illocutions whose conduct requires a specific constitutive collective intentionality and cooperation between interlocutors. How do speakers come to share the same conversational intention and coordinate their contributions? Do they negotiate conversational types? Indeed they do.

2.8.1 Cognition-Oriented Pragmatics

The objective of cognition-oriented (internal) pragmatics is to account for the cognitive bases of linguistic performance, which encompass the inferential processes leading to the final interpretation, or the interface relationship between grammar and pragmatics. The groundwork for this type of approach was first laid by Grice (1975), Sperber and Wilson (1986) and Levinson (2000), who endeavor to establish general principles that govern different aspects of use and understanding of language (Escandell-Vidal 2004: 348). Cognition-oriented pragmatics also studies cultural breakdowns and pragmatic failure (Moeschler 2004), which are especially relevant to translation studies. Cognition-oriented theories of pragmatics seek to specify and describe the biological or cognitive foundations underlying communicative behavior, which means the formulation of principles with predictive power. Generally speaking, cognitive pragmatics is largely based on the relevance-theoretic approach of Sperber and Wilson (1995), which envisions
pragmatics as a kind of information-processing system for interpreting human communicative behavior.

2.9 Communication theory for the professional

This leads us to the central idea of this study which is “what is the kind of communication expected of a professional at his work place and therefore how do we as teachers train our students to that end?” One theory that can help us study our behaviour or help us improve on it is the politeness theory. In the professional sphere, people interact all the time and indulge in speech acts that can be face threatening or face preserving. The politeness theory developed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) clarifies how we manage our own and others’ identities through interaction, in particular, through the use of politeness strategies.

From Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory, speech act researchers have widely adopted the notions of face, the strategies for doing face threatening acts, and especially the context factors power (P), social distance (D) and ranking of impositions (R) (e.g., Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989). Building on Goffman’s (1967) notion of identity and facework, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) determined when, why, and how interpersonal interaction is constructed through (or in the absence of) politeness.

2.10 Assumptions of Politeness Theory

Three primary assumptions guide politeness theory. First, politeness theory assumes that all individuals are concerned with maintaining face (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987). Simply put, face refers to the desired self-image that you wish to present to
others; face also includes the recognition that your interactional partners have face needs of their own. There are two dimensions to the concept of face: positive face and negative face.

**Positive face** includes a person’s need to be liked, appreciated, and admired by select persons. Thus, maintaining positive face includes using behaviors to ensure that these significant others continue to view you in an affirming fashion. **Negative face** assumes a person’s desire to act freely, without constraints or imposition from others. Importantly, it is difficult to achieve positive and negative face simultaneously; that is, acting in a way so that you gain others’ approval often interferes with autonomous and unrestricted behavior.

Second, politeness theory assumes that human beings are rational and goal oriented, at least with respect to achieving face needs (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987). In other words, you have choices and make communicative decisions to achieve your relational and task-oriented goals within the context of maintaining face. Notably, Brown and Levinson posited that face management works best when everyone involved helps to maintain the face of others. In other words, because “everyone’s face depends on everyone else’s being maintained” (Brown & Levinson, 1987), it is in your own best interest to make decisions that uphold this mutual, and rather vulnerable, construction of face.

The final assumption, and despite the understanding of face as mutually constructed and maintained, Politeness Theory maintains that some behaviors are fundamentally face threatening (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987). Inevitably, you will threaten someone else’s face, just as another person will, at some point, threaten yours.
These face-threatening acts (FTAs) include common behaviors such as apologies, compliments, criticisms, requests, and threats (Craig, Tracy, & Spisak, 1993). Politeness theory, then, ties together these assumptions to explain and predict how, when, and where FTAs occur, as well as what individuals can do to restore face once endangered.

2.10.1 What are the politeness strategies?

A few strategies have been suggested to uphold and reclaim one’s own face that pertain to maintaining or threatening the face of others. As stated earlier, face is the self-image that individuals desire to present to others as well as the acknowledgment that others have face needs of their own. To create and maintain this desired self-image, individuals must use facework—specific messages that thwart or minimize Face-threatening acts (Goffman, 1967). Preventive facework strategies include communications that a person can use to help oneself or avert another. Explaining theories of Interpersonal Communication Cupach & Metts, 1994 state for example, that avoiding certain topics, changing the subject, or pretending not to notice the occurrence of Face-Threatening Acts are all preventive facework strategies.

Similar to preventive facework, corrective facework consists of messages that an individual can use to restore one’s own face or to help another restore face after Face-Threatening Acts has occurred (Cupach & Metts, 1994). Corrective facework includes the use of strategies such as avoidance, humor, apologies, accounts or explanations of inappropriate actions, and physical remediation wherein one attempts to repair any physical damage that has resulted from the Face-Threatening Acts. Importantly, and as noted earlier, your own face needs may conflict with your partner’s face needs. How you
manage this discrepancy between self and other’s needs may instigate your use of Face-Threatening Acts. As you might imagine, behaving so as to gain others’ approval (positive face) can obviously interfere with acting so as to appear self-sufficient and unrestricted (negative face). Sometimes, then, individuals need to choose between positive and negative face needs. Especially when your desire to appear unencumbered outweighs your desire to be liked, you may need to engage in a face-threatening act.

According to politeness theory, individuals can choose one of five supra strategies when communicating in a manner that could potentially threaten the face of another (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Moving from most polite (and least direct) to least polite (and most direct), these suprastrategies include avoidance, going off record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and bald on record. A speaker who uses avoidance simply chooses not to communicate in a way that would create embarrassment or a loss of face for another, whereas when a speaker goes off record, he or she subtly hints or indirectly mentions the face-threatening topic. Hinting or making indirect suggestions leave the message open to interpretation, thereby minimizing any face threat.

A somewhat more direct approach, negative politeness, occurs when the speaker makes an effort to recognize the other’s negative face needs, that is, the receiver’s need of freedom and lack of restraint. With negative politeness, you appeal to the receiver’s negative face needs through apologies and self-effacement to make yourself appear vulnerable to the other, while also acknowledging that the Face-Threatening Acts are impolite and inhibits the other’s independence. An even more direct yet less polite strategy is that of positive politeness. Using positive politeness, the speaker emphasizes the receiver’s need for positive face, that is, the need to be liked. By ingratiating the
receiver with flattery and compliments, you hope to camouflage your face-threatening behavior.

Finally, the most direct and least polite strategy is bald on record. Using this strategy, the communicator makes no attempt to protect the other’s face and simply commits the Face-Threatening Acts. According to politeness theory, people choose to engage in Face-Threatening Acts rather tactically. Specifically, there are a number of factors people use to decide how polite to be. These factors are described, for example, when considering how polite one is expected to be, communicators determine whether the person has less or more ‘prestige’ than they do, whether the communicator has ‘power’ over them at the time, and whether what is going to be said runs the ‘risk’ of hurting the other person (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

As well, each of the strategies can be used to engage in Face-Threatening Acts with positive and negative consequences. Going off record to make a request, for example, leaves much room for ambiguity and a high chance that the hint will be ignored. Conversely, using the bald-on-record approach will likely get you what you want but may cost you your own positive face in the process. Furthermore, politeness theory predicts that because humans typically commit Face-Threatening Acts to achieve a desired goal, individuals will not use strategies that are more polite than necessary because the cost of ambiguity is too great (Brown & Levinson, 1978). One should also underscore that the very understanding of face, both positive and negative, varies across cultures, within specific relationships, and even among individuals, to some degree.
Thus, a person must carefully weigh each decision to commit Face-Threatening Acts, considering the anticipated payoff in relation to the context, culture, and individual communicator characteristics of a potential Face-Threatening Acts target.

In brief, politeness theory emphasizes the notion of face. Particularly in embarrassing or inappropriate situations, individuals typically try to balance their own positive and negative face while also attending to the other’s face needs. When deliberately committing a face-threatening act, individuals can save face using a variety of strategies.

Factors that influence politeness strategies are the following: Social distance, Power and Risk. If someone has more prestige than you (someone with an impressive title or a great deal of money), you will be more polite; if someone holds little or no prestige over you, you need not be so polite.

If someone has power over you (your boss, or even your auto mechanic if your car is not running), you will be more polite; if it is someone with little power over you, you need not be so polite. If what you are going to say has a high chance of hurting someone (you are going to fire them or you are going to report that a spouse is cheating), you will be more polite; if it is not likely to hurt, you need not be so polite.

Brown and Levinson’s ‘politeness’ theory can be a powerful tool to analyse ‘politeness’ phenomena, not only in goal-oriented interaction, but also in non-goal oriented interaction. The researcher believes that in business institutions our interaction is both goal-directed as well as non-goal –directed. When one looks at the study of language in conversational context, J.L. Austin and John Searle established that language is not used only for talking about the world. It is also used for accomplishing things in the world.
Austin and Searle emphasize functions like directives, requests, promises, apologies. The researcher infers from their theory that we not just negotiate with people we seek things from them. We use language to build solidarity and enhance intimacy. Conversation which we are all the time engaged in, is a coordinated activity. We then need to be polite minimizing the negative face and maximizing positive face. We are constantly analyzing our communication or rather should analyse our conversations so as to succeed in the professional sphere more so. Indirect speech acts as described by Searle and Grice are all about being polite and fulfilling felicity conditions. Grice further talks about conversational implicatures and sincerity conditions which only emphasizes the interactional aspect of communication. One should be able to start a conversation and when the conversation intensifies, one should be able to maintain and sustain right through the conversative act. This requires that one has pragmatic competencies. Ultimately, the goal of all communication is to reach an understanding. Therefore, we need to employ strategies to make ourselves understood by using understandable speech acts. How has pragmatics helped in second language learning is going to be discussed next.

2.11 Pragmatics and Second Language Learning

With the arguments presented above, it is clear that in order to be proficient in English which is the second language in India, we need to have linguistic and pragmatic competencies. Many language experts admit that defining pragmatics is not easy. Ellis (2008) offered a concept that pragmatics cover interactional and speech acts. Interactional acts refers to the discourse structure to ensure that one utterance moves smoothly to another; how speakers manage the process of exchanging turns, how they open and close
conversations, and how they sequence acts to ensure a coherent conversation. Speech acts refer to the attempts made by language users to perform specific actions, in particular interpersonal functions such as compliments, apologies, requests or complaints. All of these are performed in interactions all the time. Related to pragmatics, Canale and Swain’s framework consists of three components – grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence; and pragmatic competence is included in the sociolinguistic competence Kasper(2000). Kasper stated that “sociolinguistic ability was defined as the ability to produce and recognize socially appropriate language in context, operationalized as requests, offers and complaints produced in oral role-plays, the selection of contextually appropriate realizations of speech acts.

From Ellis and Kasper we learn that pragmatics is related to the usage of language by its users in order to communicate with other people. Pragmatics also shows us language in communication by native-speakers. But, then again, merely having linguistics competence does not guarantee the ability to really use it in a real situation because language is not only about knowledge but it must be used to communicate with other people. This is what Richard and Rogers (2001) stated about the communicative function language: the primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication.

This leads us to the next level of enquiry. What pragmatic competence do learners need to acquire? Learners need to acquire both interactional and speech acts in order to communicate with other people in the following situations:

1. How to start and build a conversation.
2. How to give and take turns in conversation and how to express and respond to refusals, requests, apologies, complaints and compliments.

Ellis (2008) quoted the findings on the speech acts that learners can learn from what they have in their repertoire but more importantly they have to know when to use them. They are requests, apologies, refusals, compliments etc.

 REQUESTS THAT LEARNERS SHOULD ACQUIRE:-

Could you give this……

Would you like to……

Do you think I could……

Shall we……

May I …. 

Can I…. 

It would be nice…. 

Would you mind…. 

The polite pragmatic marker PLEASE….too is be used.

 ELLIS (2008) ON APOLOGIES: THE SPEECH ACT FOR APOLOGIES:-

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>SEMANTIC FORMULAS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. An expression of an apology</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Expression regret-------------I’m sorry…</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. An offer of apology-------------I apologise…..</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c. A request for forgiveness--------Excuse me…

2. An explanation or account of situations--------The bus was late…

3. An acknowledgement of responsibility
   a. Accepting the blame----------------------It was my fault.…
   b. Expressing self-deficiency----------------I wasn’t thinking.…
   c. Recognizing the other person
deserves an apology------------------------You’re right.…
   d. Expressing lack of intent----------------I didn’t mean to.…

4. An offer of repair------------------------I’ll pay for the broken vase…

5. A promise of forbearance--------------------It won’t happen again…

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**COMPLIMENTS**

People of different cultures react differently to compliments. English-speaking people usually respond thankfully to a compliment and then follow it up with a brief explanation of why they did or said. Indians tend to look shy or embarrassed and sometimes even shun a compliment saying they don’t deserve it at all. ‘It is nothing’, ‘Oh! really’, ‘Well thanks but I don’t think I deserve it.’ This response cuts a conversation whereas the response by the English people as mentioned maintains and sustains a conversation.

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**REFUSAL: SEMANTIC FORMULAS USED IN REFUSALS (ELLIS 2008)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>SEMANTIC FORMULAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIRECT</td>
<td>1. Performative-------------------------------I refuse…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When we learn a second language, English in this case, we have to know its linguistic components, i.e. phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics and discourse. The focus, however, is generally on the first four components. The acquisition of pragmatic competence covers speech acts as well as interactional acts. It involves learning how to take part in interactions in the second language which entails the

1. Non-Performative------------------------I can’t…

INDIRECT

3. Statement of regret---------------------I’m sorry…

4. Wish-----------------------------------I wish I could help…

5. Excuse---------------------------------I have a headache--

6. Statement of alternative----------------I’d prefer to…

7. Set condition for the past or future acceptance----------If you’d asked me earlier I’d have…

8. Promise of future acceptance------------I’ll do it next time….

9. Statement of principle--------------------I’ll never do business with friends…

10. Statement of philosophy-----------------One can’t be too careful…

11. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor-------It won’t be any fun tonight…

12. Acceptance that functions as refusal----Well, maybe…

13. Avoidance (silence & hedging)---------I’m not sure…
acquisition of discourse ability including topic initiation and development, organizational conversations and management of opening and closing of conversations, repair strategies, narrative and conversational structures and small talk. (Ellis:2008)

In chapter V of this study, a few classroom activities are suggested that could help learn pragmatic strategies. English language learning is influenced by students psychological state and learning style, which manifests in their motivation and attitude towards the language, and by the environment. Students experience psychological problems when it comes to learning English for two reasons. One could be the fact that English is not their mother tongue and second they have not learnt it in natural surroundings but through texts that do not talk of natural settings.

According to the Schumann’s Acculturation model (Schumann1978), the students in India talk freely in their mother tongues or in Hindi or borrow phrases from English occasionally or at times best remain silent. However, there are some students with high motivation who speak in English but lack pragmatic competence and hence encounter face - threatening moments that they cannot tackle or repair. Students lack awareness of the inputs given by the teacher or lack the ability to observe and learn, which is probably the main cause for not acquiring pragmatic competence. This is reflected in Schmidt (1995), who states that when learners notice the input, it becomes an intake and that noticing is a necessary condition for second language learning. And in order to acquire pragmatics, the learners must attend to both the linguistic forms of utterance and the relevant social and contextual features with which they are associated.
2.12 Conclusion

It is true that less attention has been given to the development of pragmatic competence and the result is that learners just know the language without really knowing how to use it to their advantage. Ellis (2008) first offered three major components for the acquisition of pragmatics competence: the learners’ linguistic competence, first language transfer, and the status of learner autonomy. The learners’ linguistic competence determines their ability to construct native-type discourse, and when they cannot do it, they usually resort to their first language. We know that first language transfer is something unavoidable in Second Language Acquisition.

Ellis (2009) also emphasized the need to provide context of learning, i.e. environment to learn the pragmatic competence. Even though it is noted that individual pragmatic ability plays a great role in the development of pragmatic competence, but still it is necessary to explore the context in terms of the specific types of the input and interactions learners are exposed to.

English in real-time setting can be very upsetting and terrifying for some learners, hence, one needs to create a simulated environment for natural learning and the classroom is one such safe or rather less terrifying setting. In the third chapter of this study, certain tools for measuring pragmatics competence has led to this realization that if as instructors we can create an environment resembling real-time setting and make learners aware of the strategies they need to employ for successful communication in the professional sphere, we could achieve the goal of this study: to make successful professionals.
In the third chapter, we will look at the data tools and the processes of administering the tools. It includes the description of the field work undertaken.

This is done to find out 1. What are the spoken strategies students employ in the classroom and does that prepare them for the workplace communication?

2. Are the students aware of the strategies they employ, if they so do?