Research Directions in Anthropological Pragmatics

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Abstract: Anthropological linguistics, and by default also anthropological pragmatics, grew as sub-disciplines of both anthropology and linguistics. "The intellectual basis for anthropological linguistics in the United States derives from Boas ([1911] 1966), whose interests and concerns led to the anthropological view of language, which is that language is an integral part of culture (…)" (Klein 2006: 296). Pragmatics enters the scene, telling the researcher how to analyse the aforementioned phenomena. Therefore, anthropological pragmatics would be responsible for equipping the researcher with tools, for it is language and language-oriented mechanisms of communication, the study of which provides a much clearer insight into cultural phenomena which often direct the use of language representing culture from both the synchronic and the diachronic point of view. "[O]ne approaches language from an anthropological view, which includes the uses of language and the uses of silence, as well as the cultural problems involved in silence and speech" (*ibid*.).

Keywords: anthropological linguistics, anthropological pragmatics, contact linguistics, language, culture.

1. Introduction

It was as early as 1927 when Edward Sapir published his work on patterning behaviour in society in both form and function. It is for pragmatics to research exactly how the cultural exchanges of meanings between interlocutors are patterned, and whether it is at all possible to work out models for such patterns. By means of applying anthropological pragmatics one can also research the "(…) relevance of language to the study of human behavior (…)" with particular emphasis placed upon "(…) the focus on linguistic meaning and how it affects behavior" (Klein 2006: 298) of people in their everyday activities and daily routines, as well as their exceptional linguistic behaviour, *e.g.*, in moments of triumph and in anger. While pointing to relatively new sub-disciplines of pragmatics proper, one ought to mention that pragmatics itself has been for quite some time considered a subdivision of semiotics

and, at the same time, a kind of Cinderella subject, where "[p]ragmatics (…) is the study of signs (and sign systems) in relation to their users; whereas SEMANTICS is the study of signs in relation to their designata (what they refer to), and SYNTAX is the study of signs or expressions in relation to one another" (Leech, Thomas 1990: 173). Starting from the above assumption, that pragmatics is a sub-discipline of the study of signs and sign systems, anthropological pragmatics broadens the research perspective of pragmatics proper and requires from the researcher to view their research as an integral part of the study of human communication, and of its fluctuating context. From the point of view of pragmatics, most of what can be said can also be classified as a part of the system of illocutions. John Searle in his works talked about five (basic) types of speech acts, namely:

> ASSERTIVES [that] commit S to the truth of some proposition (e.g. stating, claiming, reporting, announcing);
>
> DIRECTIVES [that] count as attempts to bring about some effect through the action of H (e.g. ordering, requesting, demanding, begging);
>
> COMMISSIVES [that] commit the speaker to some future action (e.g. promising, offering, swearing to do something);
>
> EXPRESSIVES [that] count as the expression of some psychological state (e.g. thanking, apologizing, congratulating);
>
> DECLARATIONS [which] are speech acts whose "successful performance … brings about the correspondence between the prepositional content and reality" (e.g. naming a ship, resigning, sentencing, dismissing, excommunicating, christening). (Searle [1975] 1979a, [1975] 1979b; cited in Leech and Thomas 1990: 179)

Studying only actual sentences and phrases tagged as assertives, commissives, or declarations, would not seem complete, for they are more often than not pronounced on particular occasions only, and quite often by people who are premeditatedly stance-taking by uttering them. Hence the anthropological part of anthropological pragmatics is ready to equip the researcher with adequate tools to ethnographically describe an entire speech event which can encompass quite a few individual speech acts. Therefore, it does not suffice for anthropological pragmatics to quote somebody's statement, but it is also necessary to add when, to whom, and with what word choices the statement was made; similarly it does not suffice to quote an order,

a request, a promise, or an apology, but the researcher has to describe the entire process of communicating information, including its nonverbal circumstances, which can influence the meaning of the information in question.

It is worth underlining that for the purpose of this short work, simplifying a complex issue somewhat, the crucial research theme of anthropological pragmatics is understood to be the study of the essence of language and the essence of culture in the form of their combined and simultaneous regularities in a specific and contextualized functional environment. Having said that, I automatically subscribe to the fact that there are "(…) two distinct scientific traditions dealing with 'what we do' (*i.e.*, our praxis): either the social science of actions and events, such as sociology and anthropology, or the logico-linguistic science of propositionally centred regularities of speech acts" (Koyama 2006: 304). The above is supplemented by the pragmatic tradition which includes "(…) the social sciences, sociology, anthropology, critical philosophy, and [large] parts of contemporary pragmatics such as critical discourse analysis and social pragmatics" (*ibid*.), but one must not forget also other disciplines which can take an active part in pragmatic-oriented research, including "(…) analytic logic, linguistics, and parts of psychology, anthropology, and pragmatics (*e.g*., ethnoscience, cognitive linguistics, and the theories of speech acts, implicature, and relevance)" (*ibid*.).

2. Background taxonomy[1]

Anthropological pragmatics is an integral part of anthropological linguistics, whose main task is to address itself to "(…) the function of speech behavior among all the kinds of behavior that are recognized in a society" (Silverstein 1975: 157). As Michael Silverstein observes, "[t]o explain social behavior, anthropologists speak in terms of a conceptual system called 'culture;' to explain linguistic behavior in particular, linguists speak in terms of a conceptual system called 'grammar.' It follows that a grammar is part of a culture" (*ibid*.). What is more, any given culture can be built by a number of different communicational grammars (see Chruszczewski 2002, 2003, 2006), regarding both verbal and non-verbal aspects of the construction of information transmission. Silverstein (1975: 158) summarizes the

[1] A slightly different version of this excerpt appeared in Piotr Chruszczewski (2010) "Language in Relation to Man: On the Scope and Tasks of Anthropological Linguistics." [In:] Zdzisław Wąsik (ed.) *Consultant Assembly III: In Search of Innovatory Subjects for Language and Culture Courses.* Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Filologicznej we Wrocławiu; 121-126.

above issue by saying that "[i]n terms of language, meaning is what is communicated each time one member of a society speaks to someone (a 'speech act'). In terms of social behavior, meaning is what is communicated each time one member of society behaves in certain ways toward someone (a 'cultural act')." For it is exactly what we call social behaviour that "(…) in general communicates native facts about society" (ibid.). one needs to agree with Silverstein (1975: 159) that "[t]he rules by which a speech act presupposes certain elements of the native system of cultural concepts is called the 'function' of speech act." And that "[t]o study speech only for its sentential, and hence, prepositional value – which we recognize as unique in our European tradition – is to appreciate a fraction of the meaning of speech behavior" (*ibid*.).

It is believed that human communication is not just about passing texts from one person to another, but is an elaborate process involving conceptually organizing, physically coordinating and verbally exchanging all sorts of information. People decode and encode messages based on their situational, social and cultural frames of reference; and it is anthropological linguistics that investigates how people organize their living spaces, and the ways according to which people organize their dynamically fluctuating symbolic systems of information exchange. From the historical point of view the name "anthropological linguistics" is sometimes used to describe investigations of languages understood as phenomena of a linguistic nature for anthropological purposes. One has to be aware that the term used to have a much broader range than it has today. An anthropological study of language, from the technical point of view, equates to anthropological linguistics; it differs from other sub-disciplines of linguistics only by its anthropological research perspective, and it differs from linguistic anthropology by its linguistic research methodology.

Anthropological linguistics (see also Klein 2006) has recently become a very broad scientific discipline, engulfing a few other already autonomous disciplines such as contact linguistics, field linguistics (see Bowern 2008), sociolinguistics or pragmatics (pragmalinguistics). Anthropological linguistics has many common and convergent fields of interest with other sub-disciplines of linguistics. One can say that the primary assumptions of anthropological linguistics are the following:

– deepening and systematizing knowledge regarding all human communicative behaviours (similar to communication studies);

– researching human biologically constituted capabilities and communicative needs concerning verbal communication (similar to neurolinguistics and psycholinguistics);

– researching the quality and intensity of the inter-human contact types, leading to significant modifications within the human communicative environment (similar to sociolinguistics);

– researching the relationships between humans and the cultural embeddings within which they live, and which they produce by means of their symbolic and communicative acts (similar to linguistic semiotics); and last but not least,

– researching particular text types which are communicated only in specific situational embeddings (similar to pragmatics).

In conducting its research, linguistic anthropology uses linguistic research tools and linguistic investigative methods, but does not refrain from research methods commonly applied in cultural anthropology, ethnography, or even in archaeology. In its early days it was characteristic for anthropological linguistics to place a great emphasis on the complementarity of: cultural anthropology, physical (actually biological) anthropology, archaeology, pragmatics and linguistics, which was crucial in interpreting the culture under discussion (many native American cultures were researched with the above complementarity principle in mind). The above was triggered by the need to find out and understand the way in which the particular language functioned in its broader, cultural perspective.

Researchers of the "Franz Boas school", *i.e.*, Edward Sapir, Benjamin Lee Whorf, Alfred L. Kroeber, did their best in order to find out about not only the culture which they were investigating, but also the language of that particular culture which they were documenting by means of their thorough participant observation (see, *e.g.*, Kroeber 1952; [1953] 1963) . It is they who can be truly called the pioneers of contemporary field linguistics. Among other issues it was that very method which helped establish the fact that there are no "better" or "worse" languages, and that all languages have to be investigated with reference to their own culture and users. One version of the above has come to be known as the principle of linguistic relativism or the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis which in its radical form does not have many supporters, because it would mean that it is the language which one uses that directs the way one perceives extra-linguistic reality. Nowadays there is no doubt that the human mind, while constructing meanings in communication, does not act in accordance with such a simple model. Nevertheless, there are reasons for the existence of its less radical version, proved by research data from quite a few languages; in other words, it is much easier to memorize or to describe objects and processes which have their proper names in the language used by our respondent (see Whorf 1956; Lucy 1992). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, even in its radical

version, seemed plausible until the 1950s, that is until the beginnings of cognitive sciences. New investigations have demonstrated that, apart from the cultural patterns worked out by people all over the world, linguistic complexity and the human potential to generate meanings need to be based upon a much firmer and more profound species-specific cognitive foundation. In consequence, proponents of the "cognitive revolution" postulated that cultural variability as seen in natural languages is solely a superficial feature as compared to cognitive universals (Wierzbicka 1996; Gumperz, Levinson 1996; Levinson [1997] 2003). What is more, cognitive universalism in its most radical version proposed by Jerry A. Fodor (1975) presupposes that all possible human concepts derive from an inborn human "language of thought" (see Pinker 1994: 55-82), (sometimes called also "Mentalese" [Carruthers 1996]), and all semantic concepts in natural languages are sheer projections of concepts taken from the repertoire of cognitive universals. If the above were true, the acquisition of the first language would come down to finding the proper cultural correlation between local realizations and universal meanings (Pinker 1994). To sum up, one can observe that none of the above hypotheses seems to be verifiable in its radical version, however, once one selects and links certain elements coming from both doctrines, then one is faced with a verifiable, quite reasonable and potentially productive research hypothesis.

According to contemporary research one can distinguish two main concepts of anthropological linguistics, they are: culture and language, where the notion of culture can be comprehended as the domain of cultural practices by means of which people construct their social reality[2]. The entire process is conducted by means of linguistic communicational patterns on a highly symbolic level, due to which the social constructs can be maintained and changed within the minds of the communicating individuals as well as in the extra-linguistic reality. The leading theme of any research oriented towards anthropological linguistics is directed at the documentation of the fluctuation of meaning observed between communicating individuals on the basis of their linguistic practices. It is the process of the construction of meaning which is placed at the foundation of any discursive practice

[2] "If cultural practices are those meaningful practices through which humans in relationships sustain ongoing histories of social structure coupling, then foremost among these must be linguistic practices. What people do incessantly in every known society is talk. Linguistic practices are the most pervasive way in which humans make meanings and sustain social systems; they do not exhaust human cultural practices, but are clearly primary among them. Humans could be succinctly defined as social beings encultured through language" Foley (1997: 24).

and any research perspective embarked upon by researchers working in this domain. With reference to the conducted research, and on the basis of the contemporary overlapping investigative perspectives of anthropology and linguistics one can consider the following working taxonomy of the disciplines under discussion:

ANTHROPOLOGY OF LANGUAGE:

1. *Linguistic anthropology* – researches relationships between culture, language and a specific speech community.

2. *Cultural linguistics* – one of its paradigms is researching the relationships between: language – culture – man – reality (among other issues also the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis).

3. *Anthropological linguistics* (main directions of research):

a. *Field linguistics* – documents languages (including endangered and moribund languages).

b. *Typological linguistics* – conducts research on the types of the languages of the world.

c. *Contact linguistics* is a relatively new scientific discipline which can be subdivided into:

linguistics of external-social contacts:

including *creolinguistics* as a sub-discipline investigating the creation mechanisms of pidgins, creoles, and mixed languages; and *macro-sociolinguistics* (including sub-disciplines researching, *e.g.*, language death mechanisms triggered by contacts between politically stronger and weaker languages);

linguistics of internal-social contacts in changing situations (*i.e.*, *anthropological pragmatics):*

including *micro-sociolinguistics* as a sub-discipline investigating, *e.g.*, the ethnography of speaking, communicative events, linguistic politeness, *etc*.; and *pragmatics* (*i.e.*, pragmalinguistics), dealing, among other issues, with the description of the immediate situational embedding of produced texts.

3. The communicative and cultural niche construction

Jacob Mey (1994: 3261) is of the opinion that "[p]ragmatics appears to be the first, historically motivated approach towards a societally relevant practice of linguistics." Mey said the above having in mind a brief quotation of Sir John Lyon's idea regarding the bifurcation in linguistics:

(…) linguistics is no different from any other science; and the point would not be worth stressing, if it were not the case that some linguists, out of sympathy with current developments, have seen a necessary opposition between what have been called "formalism" and "realism" in the study of language. (Lyons 1968: 50-51)

Lyons subdivides the approaches into "structural" – *i.e.* more theoretically oriented and the more "practical" – *i.e.* oriented towards actual language use. As regards the tasks of anthropological pragmatics, let me paraphrase Mey's (see 1994: 3269) words , and say that anthropological pragmatics can also be given the task of trying to solve the numerous practical difficulties that are inherent in the exercise of linguistic functions. Quite a few of these difficulties of a communicational nature have been opened up to anthropological pragmatics by the study of ethnography, or anthropology proper. However, in order to find answers to them one needs to go beyond ethnography or anthropology, because they can be found only at the interface and at the crossroads of the social, cognitive and communicational sciences. The cultural niche construction is such an interface of those sciences. It was John Odling-Smee and Kevin N. LaLand (2009) who in their recent work presented the way in which niche-construction may have been evolving according to the following model:

(1) The basic *natural-evolutionary* niche:

Sources of natural selection in environments (…) provide the context in which diverse organisms compete to survive and reproduce, influencing which genes are passed on to the next generation. The adaptations of organisms are assumed to be consequences of autonomous natural selection moulding organisms to fit pre-established environmental templates. These templates are dynamic because processes that are independent of organisms frequently change the worlds to which organisms adopt. (Odling-Smee, LaLand 2009: 99-100)

The niche relationship between niche-constructing organisms and their naturally selecting environments does not impose any kinds of bias, either in favor of natural selection or in favor of niche construction. Instead it allows natural selection and niche

construction to be modelled as reciprocal causal processes in evolution. This simple revision allows niche construction to be fully recognized as a cause of evolutionary change. (Odling-Smee, LaLand 2009: 105)

(2) The developed *social* niche:

The social niche is the subset of natural selection pressures in an evolutionary niche that stem from interactions with other organisms I their social groups. It constitutes the resources (e.g. food), services (e.g. grooming), and other outputs (e.g. threats)provided by organisms for each other. It also includes all the ways in which individual organisms can actively defend themselves, compete with, form alliances with, cooperate, exploit, or manipulate other organisms, and by doing so modify some of the natural selection pressures they encounter in their niche. (Odling-Smee, LaLand 2009: 106-107)

The authors argue that the social niche construction probably played a major role in the evolution of human societies and the evolution of language.

(3) The complex *communicative* niche:

In primates and other large-brained organisms, communicative niche construction typically depends on animals sending "messages" to and from each other's brains, in ways that involve a degree of learning and cognition. (Fragaszy, Perry 2003 cited in Odling-Smee, LaLand 2009: 108-109)

It is very important in this regard to remember that even though primates can construct, develop, and profit from the communicative niche it is virtually impossible for them to pass precise meta-information from generation to generation or store information concerning their skills.

(4) The *cultural* niche:

The creation of a cultural niche requires large-brained organisms not only to have a way of passing information, but to have a refined tool of passing sophisticated and precise information both from generation to generation and over long distances. In other words, the creation of a cultural niche requires the possession of language, which enables not only the development of symbolic methods of communication but also the storage of previously acquired information. Those anthropologists interested in pragmatics are the ones equipped with the tools to research a number of phenomena involved in the construction and transmission of information regarding cultural niches, which vary from speech community to speech community.

4. Discursive aspects of language acquisition

The question of anthropological pragmatics is inherently connected with the relationship between pragmatics – as a sub-discipline of linguistics "(…) that studies the relationship between natural language expressions and their uses in specific situations" (Bussmann [1990] 1996: 374), and the study of language as a solely human and biological predisposition to communicate precise information by verbal means. If one considers pragmatics to be "(…) defined as the study of the rules and principles which govern language in use, as opposed to the abstract, idealized rules of, for instance, grammar, and of the relationships between the abstract systems of language on the one hand, and *language in use* on the other (…)" (Malmkjær 1991: 354), then in this particular regard, studies in anthropological pragmatics should be considered highly efficient for researchers studying a number of aspects of discourse. The research-oriented meaning of discourse can be best exposed here as (1): textually-constituted and socially-established dynamic power relationships, observed in, *e.g*., religion, politics, science, economy, *etc*., and (2): an expression of ideas, feelings, beliefs, embodied in various realizations of art, religion, science, and so on. We decode types of discourse by discovering the pragmatic functions of their linguistic texts or communicative events which are always embedded in their extra-linguistic context, and by means of which types of specific discourses always manifest themselves. From such a perspective, discourse studies can function as a research perspective of a larger subject of investigations, *i.e.*, of anthropological pragmatics, where language – in general – and texts – in particular – are to be viewed as an intricately organized and inherently human way of acquiring meanings for interacting with the environment. Bearing the above in mind, Bernard Comrie (1981: 3) is of the opinion that:

Given the simple observation that children learn their first language so readily, on might wonder whether an ever stronger claim could not be made, namely that the language as a whole is innate. This would assume that a child born into a given speech community is already pre-programmed with knowledge of the language of the speech community, presumably having inherited it from his parents. However, further observation soon shows that this scenario, though clearly simplifying the learnability problem, cannot be correct. It would imply that a child could only learn, or at least would much more readily learn, the language of his parents, irrespective of the language of the surrounding community. Now, it is known from observation that children acquire, with approximately equal facility, the language of whatever speech community they happen to grow up in, quite irrespective of the language of

their parents or their more remote ancestors; this can be seen most clearly in the case of children who are brought up by speakers of a language different from that of their natural parents. (...) One can thus establish an equation between language universals and innate ideas: language universals would be those innate linguistic principles which facilitate the child's language-learning task.

Comrie does not mention, however, any very important extra-linguistic prerequisites which presumably are necessary for a child to start speaking a given language surrounding the child in question. With reference to the above, one needs to add that it is precisely anthropological pragmatics that rushes to the researcher's aid with its research tools to help him in his investigation of, for example, children's methods of verbal interaction (also known as "baby talk" [see, *e.g.*, Ferguson 1956]) with the surrounding world. Comrie seems to be saying that since all small children have two legs, it is universal for all children to walk, regardless of the lay of the land (all children have speaking apparatus, so they can speak any language). However, there seems to be a fault in the logic here. One cannot equate a 100% mechanical ability to walk with a 100% cognitive ability to speak! It seems here that Comrie makes too great a leap in his equation, because he does not even mention the enormous diversity in the natural environment in which humans happen to live. In other words, it may be stretching things to say that there are pan-human universals of, for example, a transformational nature that govern all human languages.

The only universal phenomenon one can state with any certainty is that all children are born with some capacity to memorize things, happenings, and events. Thus, children can remember their mother, and they can also communicate with them using the same sounds as their mothers use. Mothers usually utter very simple sounds to their new-born infants, and their way of communicating with their child gradually becomes more and more sophisticated as the child grows older. Children also become very quickly emotionally connected with the person who spends most of their time with them – feeding them and communicating with them, so naturally children want to imitate both their mother's verbal behavior and all the other discursive practices observable to the child. But as regards speaking, the child memorizes first a number of sounds/words, then associates the sounds with particular larger, more intricately built into the social order cultural happenings such as, say, breakfast, lunch or dinner:

CRIES (intonation, voice pitch, length of the cry, *etc*.);

WORDS & EMOTIONS, *e.g.*: "ma ma" + smile; which means that the child most probably already associates the sound with the person who takes care of him;

WORDS & HAPPENINGS, *e.g.*: "da da" (going outside); "ya ya" (eating);

WORDS & culturally defined EVENTS, *e.g.*: brunch, tea, dinner, *etc*.).

The last phase of a child's learning is the stage of understanding larger culture-specific units, such as, for example, "going to grandma's for Sunday lunch". Such a large unit can be built of smaller sub-units such as: "dressing nicely", "buying flowers for grandma", "greeting nicely", "behaving oneself at the table" which can include the proper usage of culturally suitable table utensils, and this is precisely the stage where researchers of anthropological pragmatics still have much research to do.

As regards the development of children's complex communicational patterns, Kern, Davis and Zink (2009: 205) researched 4 French, 3 Romanian, 4 Dutch and 4 Tunisian "children developing normally in a monolingual environment according to community standards" and video-recorded every two weeks from eight through to twenty five months. They recorded 529 hours in total and then they transcribed the tapes using the International Phonetic Alphabet. The authors state that:

(...) in the babbling period, children produced more vowels (60, 378) than consonants (51,269). (...) In the early word period, children produced an approximately equivalent frequency of vowels (21,952) and consonants (20,726). (...) In the later word period, children produced more consonants (79,058) than vowels (72,646). (Kern, Davis, Zink 2009: 214)

They conclude their study, by saying that:

Only in later word period, when the children were producing a much larger number of meaningful words, was there an explosion of phonetic diversification signalling emergence of complexity in production system capacities. Emergence of later appearing sounds, including fricative, affricate, and liquid manners of articulation and dorsal and glottural places of articulation was apparent. Expansion of the vowel space to include diverse vowel types not related to the LLQ[3] *constraint was also apparent in the later word period. This increase in output complexity seems largely related to more control over speech production system enabling increase in capacities for matching language forms. Increases were not clearly related to precise ambient language patterns of input as they were consistent across languages.* (Kern, Davis, Zink 2009: 226)

[3] LLQ – lower left part of the vocalic space vowels; described as being most frequent in early production inventories across a number of studies in this period.

It is anthropological pragmatics which is best-equipped with research methods to inquire into the particulars of children acquiring their native or first language. Hence, it is this discipline which should be responsible for registering and describing all the possible everyday situations in which small children are exposed to language and, what is more, its task should also be to record all the natural (so to say, an ideal model), prototypical verbal methods of information exchange with other users of the language in question. These renderings of natural language verbal exchanges, together with detailed descriptions of the specific situations of speaking, could then serve as the basis of blueprints for learners and teachers of foreign languages who actually learn entire discourse structures together with the linguistic forms which naturally go with them.

5. On linguistic philosophy

In his discussion of the intersection of anthropology and pragmatics Koyama (2006: 306) observes that the "(…) genuinely pragmatic tradition often known as the social sciences, includes anthropology and sociology, the origin of which goes back to Bronisław Malinowski (1884 – 1942), [Max] Weber (1864 – 1920), Georg Simmel (1858 – 1918), Emilé Durkheim (1858 – 1912), [Franz] Boas (1858 – 1942), Karl Marx (1818 – 1883), Alexander [von] Humboldt (1769 – 1859) and ultimately the Enlightenment philosophers such as the Marquis de Condorcet (1743 – 1794), Voltaire (1694 – 1778), and perhaps even the earlier Giambattista Vico (1668 – 1744)." However, according to Koyama (2006: 306) it is Johann Herder (1744 – 1803) who is supposed to be the most prominent figure in the current discussion. Herder was a student of Immanuel Kant, "(…) who critically accepted Kant's critical philosophy and, in doing this, launched a metacritique of the latter, especially of its claim to human (and even 'anthropological' – the term is Kant's own) universality. In Herder's view, such alleged universality is no more than an ideology, conditioned by the historic, geographic, and cultural (that is, contextual) factors peculiar to the Idealist philosopher Kant and his times, *i.e.*, the modern era of the German (secularised Lutheran) Enlightenment" (Koyama 2006: 306). Herder attacked "(…) Kant's claim to universality by appealing to the cultural diversity of the empirical world(s)" (*ibid.*), which not too many years later led to Boas' idea of linguistic (and cultural) relativism.

Anthropological pragmatics can by all means be situated within the discipline of linguistic philosophy and researched as such, for this sub-discipline of linguistics

clearly marks the linguistic turn in philosophy that occurred in the first half of the twentieth century. The above was very nicely underlined by Richard Rorty (1967: 3), stating that:

[by] (...) the recent philosophical revolution, that of linguistic philosophy, I shall mean (...) the view that philosophical problems are problems which can be solved (or dissolved) either by reforming language, or by understanding more about the language we presently use. This view is considered by many of its proponents to be the most important philosophical discovery of our time, and, indeed, of the ages. By its opponents, it is interpreted as a sign of the sickness of our souls, a revolt against reason itself, and a self-deceptive attempt (in Russell's phrase) to procure by theft what one has failed to gain by honest toil.

In the process of tracing the main trends in the development of pragmatics, Geoffrey Leech and Jenny A. Thomas conclude their introduction by stating that pragmatics, before it became a "significant factor in linguistic thinking" (Leech, Thomas 1990: 173), was, at the beginning of the 1970s, considered by many to be just "(…) a 'fringe subject' on the borders of philosophy and linguistics, to its present broad concern with linguistic communication in its social and cultural context" (*ibid*.). By the very fact that pragmatics is "(…) the study of meaning of linguistic utterances for their users and interpreters" (*ibid*.) This sub-discipline of anthropological linguistics locates itself also in the centre of the research interests of anthropologists seeking the linguistic and cultural patterns of communication, and ethnographers who describe those patterns in their natural milieux.

If we presume that the formal subject matter of anthropology is based upon research into cultural forms and social rules, we again find ourselves in the centre of the research interests of sociologists and linguists, all of whom are approaching quite similar subject matters, albeit from different research perspectives. Nevertheless the research perspectives under discussion have a few common features, namely, all of them are interested in discovering how people form meaningful units of communication (both verbal and nonverbal) under variable circumstances, and within changing contextual embeddings (*i.e.*, in dynamically changing situations, fluctuating social groups and evolving cultures). The above boils down to the fact that all the aforementioned researchers, in order to complete their research tasks, need to work with their discipline-specific research tools and research perspectives upon the same research objects, entering the vast field of anthropological pragmatics, so they can all meet their research objectives, and, ideally, come up with research models pertaining to their set study goals.

Needless to say, "(…) the everyday understanding of how the world works – turns out to be extraordinarily diverse, maddeningly inconsistent, and highly resistant to scepticism of any kind" (Herzfeld 2001: 1), and what is more, "(…) [t]here has clearly been an enormous expansion of the discipline's topical range since the Victorians' preoccupation with what they called savage societies" (Herzfeld 2001: 2). Bearing the above in mind, I am going to present in this short work a few selected directions in which anthropological pragmatics has recently been developing. One needs to be aware that the first prerequisite for any single work of anthropology is to have achieved "(…) a rationality capable of transcending cultural boundaries" (Herzfeld 2001: 3), for only such a study which can detach itself from its own culture and place its emphasis upon the culture researched, can be truly called modern, and of great scientific value (for discussion see, *e.g.*, Tambiah 1990).

In this sense one can conduct an equal-terms study into science, magic or religion, all of which can be characterized by instances of ritualistic language which is abundant with:

"[r]epetition and redundancy, as well as the simplification of language and a very low degree of reference to the things of the real social world (Tambiah 1979). While some rituals aim to change specific situations – curing rituals are an obvious case in point – they are, in the cosmological sense, about the reassertion of order" (underlying mine – P.C.) (Herzfeld 2001: 209).

6. The anthropo-pragmatic ritual of *aisatsu*

Such linguistic and extra-linguistic forms of culturally encoded ritual can be best seen in the anthropological pragmatics of Japanese routine formulae called *aisatsu*, the equivalent of which can stand in English for "greetings and farewells." However, According to Risako Ide (2007: 2) "(…) in addition to the notions of 'greeting' and 'farewell,' *aisatsu* contains a wider range of pragmatic acts such as 'thanking,' 'apologizing,' 'introducing oneself,' 'making congratulatory remarks,' 'giving speeches,' and so on." What is more, "[o]n the non-verbal side, *aisatsu* may include the act of bowing or head-tilt in recognition of others. It may be an act of shaking hands, or bows accompanying words of thanking or apologizing, the exchange of name cards in a business context, and so forth" (Ide 2007: 3). *Aisatsu*, most unexpectedly for its European or American users, being "typically exchanged among people in talk in action, (…) can also be extended to the spirits of the ancestors, pets and other animals, personified objects such as natural sceneries like mountains or

rivers (Ide 2007: 3), which could be regarded as being in perfect congruence with the Buddhist tradition of being one with the environment that one is engulfed by. Therefore, apart from being a purely linguistic exchange of messages, the communicative act of *aisatsu* has also quite a few important social functions to fulfil. *Aisatsu* can be used:

(a) to confirm that some kind of interaction is about to take place [as an index of a speech act];

(b) to maintain a friendly relationship with the interlocutor [positive interpersonal stance-taking in order to ease communication on the peer level]; and

(c) to ritualistically maintain the interpersonal relationship in a smooth, non-problematic matter. (Suzuki 1981: 46, cited in Ide 2007: 3)

Risako Ide (2007: 4) presents also a few examples of how, by means of *aisatsu*, one can mark non-verbal, contextual boundaries:

The greeting ohayoo 'good morning' may be exchanged among in-group members such as within families and between close friends, while konnichiwa 'hello/good afternoon' is typically avoided among in-group members as this expression does not promote the casual feeling sensed in the former expression.

The above points to the fact that by means of a particular linguistic choice one is also indexing one's place within or outside a particular discourse community, which can sometimes result in the fact that, "(…) for this reason (…) college students on campus or employees in the workplace prefer to use 'good morning' when greeting their in-group members even when they meet up during the afternoon periods" (*ibid*.). Interestingly, "(…) *aisatsu* of encounters and farewells are repeated over and over during a stretch of time especially when the encounter is formal as in the repetitious act of bowing (…) [, which can] indicate that *aisatsu* is not just a one-time act, but a repeated action to confirm the social interdependence with each other" (*ibid*.). Having *aisatsu* in mind as our key example here, one can rest assured that the cultures of the world are abundant with linguistic forms of this or similar types of information exchanges, where interlocutors fully adjust their verbal messages and their non-verbal behaviour to the contextual embedding, and the mastering of which is more of a socio-cultural acquisition than anything else (see, for instance, the discussion of Jamaican proverbs seen as fully interactional and pragmatic units in Knapik 2011; or the discussion of hierarchical relationships and

kin vs. non-kin members in the Wolof greeting system in Senegal in Irvine 1974). In this place one has to agree with Herzfeld (2001) and Da Matta (1991: 23) that via the power of repeated action transformed into ritual one attempts to "(…) bring under some kind of collective control the human attempt to defer mortality, to create unique moments in the dead stretches of experience – routine, boredom, regimentation – that serve the interests of power" (Herzfeld 2001: 209). This particular form of power relationships is often manifested through language (and other cultural patterns of human behaviour) and can be studied within anthropological pragmatics under the name of discursive practices, for they "(…) are not purely and simply ways of producing discourse. They are embodied in technical processes, in institutions, in patterns for general behaviour, in forms for transmission and diffusion, and in pedagogical forms which, at once, impose and maintain them" (Foucault 1980a: 200).

7. Language-created relationships of power

The power of language, presented by Roger Fowler (1992: 258), forms a very interesting research issue, where "[p]ower is an asymmetrical relationship between A and B, where A and B may be individuals (doctor/patient, parent/child), institutions (court of law/trade unions), or a mixture (welfare organization/ individual claimant)." What is very important is the fact that "[t]he relationship is based on the unequal distribution of some crucial commodity or attribute, such as money, material goods, political opportunity, knowledge, ascribed role or status; what is 'crucial' varies from society to society, and from time to time" (*ibid*.). The changing variables mentioned by Roger Fowler are the constitutive elements of what Michael Silverstein (1975) calls "cultural acts" which also vary from one speech community to another. In light of the above Fowler (1992: 258) understands language to be "(…) not a reflex of independent social relations(…)", but rather as "(…) a social practice which is strongly instrumental in the construction and reproduction of (…) [power relationships – P.C.]." It is so due to the fact that both, language and power "(…) are theorized to be distinct entities, both variable" (Fowler 1992: 258). Fowler explains the above, adding that "[i]n a given social setting, specific interpersonal relationships amount to a certain position in the field of power: thus in a classroom, teachers have more power than students, as a result of differentials of age, physical strength, and socio-economic class, and of their ascribed roles in that particular institutional setting" (*ibid*.). Similarly one can find quite a few other social settings with a distorted balance of power, *e.g.*, the

relationships between doctors and patients in hospital; lawyers vs. their clients; officers vs. privates in the army; political leaders vs. regular party members in their constituencies; priests vs. the faithful in church, and so on. All the above-mentioned relationships happen to function within their specific nonverbal embeddings and can be analysed as very specific cultural acts in which one can note particular verbal communicative behaviour accompanying other nonverbal, social behaviour. Michael Foucault (1980b: 131) calls the entire process "the political production of truth", which is a very culture-specific process, for:

[t]ruth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the type of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements.

The verbal behaviour of any cultural act can be further analysed as a series of consecutive culture-dependent speech acts. In other words, anthropological pragmatics an be used for researching ideology, for it is language which continuously articulates it, and it is ideology, "(…) which relates directly to social practice, and, (…) varies according to circumstances" (Fowler 1992: 259). Ideology understood in the above way can also be called "a linguistic representation of the world" which is a socially constructed representation that is "(…) effected largely through language in cooperation with other semiotic systems" (*ibid*.), like for instance some nursery rhymes, which are nothing less than stereotypical misprojections of reality which can create undesirable attitudes towards other people in children (see the notorious Polish nursery rhyme which has been published for years in many elementary school books which starts in the following way: "*Murzynek Bambo w Afryce mieszka, czarną na skórę ten nasz koleżka…*" [Pol.] "A black Bambo-boy in Africa lives, so black is the skin of this little fellow…" – P.C.).

8. Folk linguistics and stance-taking

Folk linguistics, and consequently folk pragmatics, appear to be disciplines intending to collect meta-information regarding the way in which language and language-related activities are seen by mainstream language users. Nancy Niedzielski and Dennis Preston (2007: 1) are of the opinion that: "[f]olk linguistics (FL) aims to discover and analyze beliefs about attitudes towards language at every level of linguistic production, perception, and cognitive embedding by collecting

and examining overt comment about it by non-linguists (…)". FL researchers have employed a range of techniques in order to have their respondents "(…) discuss or respond to areas of language concern that expose not merely their traditional, prepackaged notions, but also the processes that govern their thinking" (*ibid*.), having said the above, Nancy Niedzielski and Dennis Preston equal folk linguistics with "folk belief which is for them about language (…), a dynamic process that allows non-specialists (*i.e*., persons with no formal training in linguistics) to express their understandings of their linguistic environment" (*ibid*.). Folk linguistics is also closely connected with the ethnography of speaking, "(…) where work in a variety of contexts has led to an enriched understanding of linguistic behavior" (Niedzielski, Preston 2007: 3), and what is more "FL also benefits the ethnography of speaking by providing richer detail about the folk ethnography surrounding language itself, data perhaps too often derived from observation of performance than from the elicitation of opinion" (ibid.). One of the key concepts in understanding the subject matter and the methods of doing folk linguistics and folk pragmatics is the fact that:

Linguists have created an agreed-on but fictitious abstraction (THE LANGUAGE) by pretending that there is a group of error-free, monodialectal, monostylistic speakers. (...) [L]inguists know that the real basis of language, however, is embedded in the brains of individual speakers. The folk, in contrast, appear to believe in their abstraction (also called THE LANGUAGE) (...), since they take it to be real, they also believe that individual language competencies somehow derive from it. Linguists know, however, that varieties (in fact idiolects themselves) are the only authentic cognitive examples of THE LANGUAGE (...). (Preston 2006: 525).

Folk linguists, with their research methodology closely related to the ethnography of communication, situates itself within the scope of the subject matter of ethnography, and as such fully locates itself within the range of interest of anthropological pragmatics.

Another current and quite promising research direction within anthropological pragmatics appears to be linguistically oriented research into stance-taking, defined as: "(…) a person's expression of their relationship to their talk, their epistemic stance – *e.g*., how certain they are about their assertions, and a person's expression of their relationship to their interlocutors (their interpersonal stance – *e.g*., friendly or dominating)" (Kiedling 2009: 172). One can observe quite a few public and personal stances one can construct, as has been mentioned above, epistemic or interpersonal ones, the important thing is the fact that stance-taking and stances are usually related linguistic choices which are made under certain contextual

circumstances; they are dynamic (new choices can always be added to previous ones), they can always change (due to new experiences, priorities, *etc*.), and they can depend and vary according to the stances of our interlocutors. Stance-taking is also a cultural phenomenon which is deeply rooted in the particular self-building strategy of both individual members of a speech community or entire ethnic groups.

9. Instead of conclusions

In his introduction to "Evolutionary pragmatics" Wolfgang Wildgen (2007) observes that "[i]n a speech delivered in Harvard in 1872 Ch. S. Pierce sketched his 'Pragmatism' as a philosophy based on the practical consequences of intellectual operations." Adding that: "[t]he term 'pragmatic' refers to Kant's *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*. From the beginning [1798 – P.C.], pragmatics had therefore a strong link to anthropology (cf. Kant) and evolutionary theory (cf. Darwin) with its central concept of adaptation (cf. Verscheueren & Brisard 2002)." Bearing the above in mind would perhaps point towards the somewhat subversive conclusion that it was actually anthropological pragmatics as such at the very heart of its philosophical beginnings, and then after a relatively long time in the history of science it entered linguistic sciences under the heading of pragmatics in the late 1960s.

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