

THE PRAGMATIC COMPONENTS OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS IN ARABIC LANGUAGE DIDACTICS

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Abstract:

The Arabic language is characterized by semantic diversity and rich grammatical and rhetorical structures that reflect the depth of Arab thought and culture. With the development of modern linguistic studies, pragmatics has emerged as an approach that focuses on the relationship between language and context, that is, on how language is used in real communication situations, rather than only in its abstract structure. Hence, the importance of linking the Arabic language with pragmatic studies becomes evident for a deeper understanding of how meanings are formed, and how context and situation influence linguistic interpretation, especially in literary, religious, and political discourse, among others. In this article, we review the pragmatic components that serve the didactics of the Arabic language and contribute to solving some of the problems learners face while receiving various language activities.

Keywords: language, pragmatics, communication, didactics, learner.

Introduction:

Pragmatics is a branch of modern linguistics concerned with the study of language in its context of use, focusing on the relationship between what is said and what is actually intended behind the utterance. It examines how the speaker uses language to achieve communicative purposes, and how the listener interprets indirect meanings through context, intention, and situation.

In light of modern linguistic developments, pragmatics has become an important tool in the field of language teaching, particularly in teaching the Arabic language to both native and non-native speakers. Focusing on the pragmatic aspect in language teaching enables the learner to understand real-life uses of language, away from ready-made patterns or structures isolated from context.

Integrating the pragmatic dimension into Arabic language didactics is a necessary step to achieve communicative competence, which includes, in addition to linguistic competence (grammatical and morphological), social, cultural, and functional competence. This enhances the learner's ability to use language appropriately in various everyday situations.

Pragmatics and Arabic Language Didactics:

Linguistic studies, especially applied ones, are concerned with language didactics. Today, they represent an undeniable center of attraction in contemporary linguistic thought, as they clarify the applied outcomes of the cognitive results of linguistic theory, by investing these results achieved in the field of theoretical linguistic research in developing methods of language teaching¹, This has been reflected in the multiplicity of educational theories that have sought each according to its intellectual, psychological, social, and linguistic frameworks to structure the learning process within precise approaches that ensure the coherence of foundations with the intended objectives², This interest has been reinforced by the very nature of the educational field itself, given its flexibility and its capacity to accommodate linguistic approaches, especially with regard to the components and elements of the teaching process. The teaching process is “an organizational process of the procedures carried out by the teacher within the classroom, particularly when presenting the subject

matter and sequencing its explanation; in other words, the teaching process in its essence is nothing but an organization of the content of the studied material, which often takes the form of a hierarchical sequence.”³

In addition to the above, teaching the Arabic language requires the adoption of educational theories that take into account the specificity of this subject. This has been reflected in the various pedagogical approaches adopted by the Algerian school in order to achieve effective results in education in general, and in teaching the Arabic language in particular. Among these approaches is the competency-based approach, which emerged as an alternative to the objectives-based approach, and which seeks to valorize the knowledge and skills acquired by the learner within the educational institution, with the aim of employing them in real contexts and confronting the challenges and problems they encounter.

Within this framework, the teaching of the Arabic language is based on developing the learner’s linguistic competencies and employing them effectively, away from excessive focus on memorization and rote learning based on abstract rules, while taking into account the specificities and requirements of each educational stage. As stated, “a learner cannot exceed, during the study of a language at a given stage, a maximum limit of vocabulary and structures; rather, in each lesson they receive, they should be limited to a certain amount, otherwise they may suffer from memory overload and even a serious cognitive strain that may prevent them from continuing their language study.”⁴

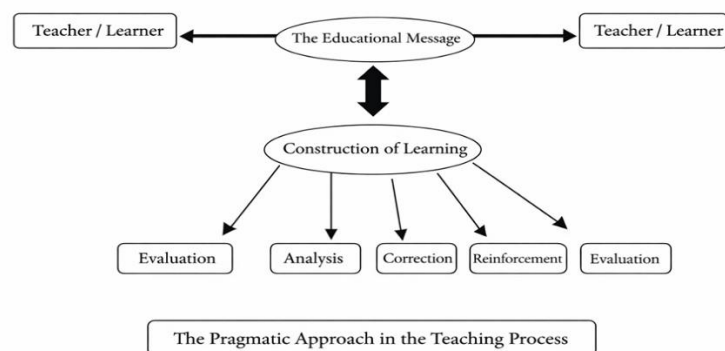
In light of this perspective, pragmatics seeks to bring more organization and effectiveness to the teaching process by taking into account its characteristics and the specificities of Arabic language instruction. The intersections between pragmatic principles and the orientations adopted in the Algerian school curriculum which has adopted the competency-based approach become evident. This adoption is not accidental, but rather aims to achieve strategic educational goals that make the learner a central actor in constructing their own learning. The learner is thus guided to engage in learning activities that enhance initiative, observation, analysis, creativity, and independence in decision-making. These practices are capable of equipping the learner with real competencies, in which the teacher becomes a guide and facilitator of the learning process, rather than merely a transmitter of knowledge.⁵

The aim of pragmatics is not to separate the various activities and skills of the Arabic language, whether in teaching or in use, but to consider them as an indivisible whole. Thus, “the holistic perspective leads to viewing language as an indivisible whole, which requires teaching it as an integrated unit whose branches are interconnected, so that together they can achieve the ultimate goal of language teaching, namely enabling the learner to use their language correctly in a way that ensures understanding and communication.

Pragmatics is therefore closely related to discourse analysis and text linguistics. In its treatment of the literary text, for example, it considers it as a text within a context, based on the principle: no text without context. It also holds that the literary text is a text with intentions, based on the principle: no text without intentions. The intentions of speech in modern pragmatic studies have thus become a fundamental starting point for determining the structural characteristics of discourse.

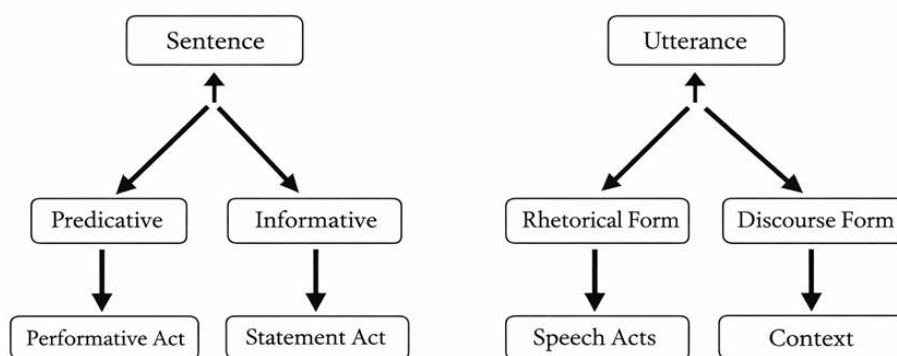
The teaching of grammar within pragmatics is not tied to a single practical method; rather, methods and alternatives benefit from one another, as “there is no entirely deductive phase nor entirely inductive phase, neither in the learner’s understanding of what the teacher conveys whether implicitly or explicitly nor in the process of acquiring expressive ability.” Accordingly, the importance of language becomes linked to its acquisition, specifically the acquisition of communicative skills aimed at achieving an operational goal capable of bringing about change. Sentences in our speech “are not used to describe reality, but to change it; they do not state anything about the present or past state of the world, but rather transform it or seek to transform it.”⁶ In addition to the necessity of acquiring oral communication skills in expressing it as a pragmatic communicative act that

characterizes the Arabic language, its acquisition must take into account expression and communication, as well as the act of self-expression and the act of oral communication with others. This is especially important if we consider that the teaching process, like pragmatics, is based on the duality of sender and receiver and the roles associated with them. The teacher is the sender and the learner is the receiver. However, pragmatics in the educational context may establish a new relationship between the same two parties, based on an operational principle whereby both parties exchange their primary roles: the teacher becomes a receiver, while the learner becomes a sender, depending on the various circumstances surrounding the teaching situation. This aims to fulfill the pragmatic principle that communication must be achieved, and that discourse takes the form of speech acts that may change when understanding becomes necessary at certain stages of learning, such as evaluation (initial, formative, or final), or during various expression activities, or in many question-and-answer situations. In such cases, the learner becomes the source of sending the question, while the receiver is the teacher who provides the answer. Thus, the act of communication in education takes on a new form according to the following scheme.



The ability of pragmatics to adapt to various situations, to accommodate a large body of knowledge, and its potential to create new frameworks for teaching Arabic language activities thus saving considerable time that might otherwise be wasted on elements that are not useful in other approaches are significant. It also enables the application of the principles advocated by its leading figures, such as Austin, in his treatment of language functions and ways of dealing with them, as he sees that “the primary function of language is not the transmission of information or the expression of ideas, but rather it is an institution that transforms utterances produced within contextual conditions into actions of a social nature.”⁷ For him, sentences are linked to actions appropriate to a given situation, with the aim of achieving performance and producing an effect. The use of declarative and performative forms is not limited merely to describing sentences and judging them as true or false; rather, the urgent need requires that they include an act in a form that conveys the accomplishment of a precise action reaching the recipient. On this basis, utterances can be judged as having succeeded or failed pragmatically.

Thus, pragmatics broadens the scope of linguistic inquiry, which traditionally operates within the domain of linguistic competence in order to determine predication in language, and relies on the distribution of sentences as the basic unit composed of a predicate and a subject. Pragmatics, however, employs the mechanisms of the rhetorical component that expresses, in a stable form, an unstable reference. It also gives consideration to sounds and intonation, making the utterance itself of central importance in the study of language. This can be illustrated as follows:



This is a very important matter and is well suited to the teaching process, provided that these elements are addressed within educational discourse with the aim of achieving effectiveness and ensuring the success of teaching the Arabic language.

Thus, if pragmatics is applied in teaching the Arabic language, it will contribute to “describing and identifying its characteristics and explaining its communicative discourse phenomena,” within the framework of the function structured by the triad of the communication process (sender/receiver/communicative situation). This is analogous to the triangle of the teaching process (teacher/learner/teaching situation).

Pragmatic linguistics has gone beyond traditional linguistic concepts that studied language as a linguistic system in and for itself, toward studying it as a system of effective communication, represented in the study of speech acts, forms of persuasion, the conditions for achieving persuasive discourse and its analysis, focusing on the context in which discourse occurs and the relationship between linguistic and non-linguistic signs and their users. Accordingly, “scholars’ attention soon turned to all these issues related to how language is used and how it is actually realized in use and in interaction. All these issues fall within a stream of studies and theories referred to by specialists as pragmatics, which is particularly concerned with how language is used in speaking or discourse.”⁸

The communicative approach, which stems from pragmatic linguistics in the field of teaching and learning, has focused on developing the learner’s communicative ability, activating their learning skills, achieving linguistic fluency, and enhancing their level of interaction with the functional uses of language. Its proponents believe that it is not sufficient for the learner to be able to read and write sentences correctly “the form of language as a basis” but rather that they must acquire the ability to use these sentences and expressions in specific communicative situations. This is achieved by paying attention to the context of use and the roles of the speaker and the listener; in other words, we speak with the aim of establishing a conversational relationship and seeking to influence the listener. Thus, mastery of the various functions of language and their uses in pragmatic contexts is attained. “When we communicate, we use language for a specific purpose, such as discussion, persuasion, or promising, etc., and we carry out these purposes within a defined social framework. The speaker chooses how to express a point, and this choice depends not only on their intentions and emotional level, but also takes into account the identity of the interlocutor and their relationship with them. Therefore, it is not sufficient for the learner to be familiar only with linguistic structures, their meanings, and their purposes; this knowledge must be used in negotiating meaning.”⁹

Based on the above, the pragmatic approach has focused on the speech act and the surrounding circumstances, as each act has a value that prompts the listener to perform an action in response to what they have understood from the speaker such as closing the window upon hearing the phrase “it is cold,” or turning on the heater. Language is thus produced in communicative situations according to communicative conditions, which do not mean that it is “merely linguistic discourse, but rather go beyond it to study the receiver’s reaction within the sender itself. Therefore, it is not limited to the relationship between the sender and the sign or between the sign and the receiver, but rather seeks to

study the reciprocal relationships between the sender and the receiver through a communicative message.”¹⁰

This orientation has contributed to strengthening interest in language within its living contexts, by focusing linguistic study on the speaker’s intentions, the communicative context, and the interactive discourse exchanges between interlocutors. The primary function of language is not limited to transmitting information, but is manifested as a tool for social interaction and effective communication between speakers. From this perspective, language teaching is viewed as a practice that originates from the culture of society and its conditions, whereby the learner is guided to develop their communicative and expressive competencies, taking into account their needs and learning specificities.

The learner’s communicative competence is based on the integration of three main abilities:

1. Grammatical competence, which includes mastery of the different levels of language: phonetics, morphology, lexicon, semantics, and syntax.
2. Sociolinguistic competence, which refers to knowledge of the relationships linking language to its non-linguistic (social and cultural) context.
3. Strategic competence, which refers to the effective use of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies.

Together, these abilities enable the learner to master both the linguistic system and the prevailing social system, and to use them effectively in various communicative situations, whether by understanding discourse addressed to them or by producing discourse appropriate to the contexts in which they interact.

Accordingly, the learner has come to occupy an important role in real and active participation. Consequently, the perception of learning has shifted from being merely a set of rigid rules memorized by heart to being a cognitive process based on understanding and comprehension. This provides learners with opportunities to engage in procedural learning attempts, problem-solving, and role-playing, thereby moving them out of a routine atmosphere into a space full of vitality and activity.

Pragmatic Components of Communication in the Educational Process:

Didactics relies on a set of elements, namely:

1. Sender / Teacher: Speaker / Instructor

The “speech agent” (the teacher) is the source that produces and explains the discourse. He plays the role of facilitator and guide in the learning process. For communication to succeed, a set of conditions must be met in constructing his discourse in order to achieve the intended purpose in a specific communicative teaching situation directed at a particular receiver. These conditions include:

A- Communicative Competence

Communicative competence is one of the most important factors for successful communication. It is the speaker’s ability to know how to use language, what to say in certain situations, when to remain silent, and when to speak. It goes beyond mere linguistic competence, which is reflected in lexical richness, mastery of language rules, control of meanings, and clarity of discourse. Among the conditions for possessing it:

Mental Retrieval of Meanings and Lexical Items

The author of **Al-Sina‘atayn** states in this regard: “If you wish to produce speech, then bring its meanings to your mind, and select for it the finest expressions, keeping them present so that they become easy for you to access and do not burden you in seeking them. Work on it while you are in the vigor of your youth and activity; if weariness overcomes you or boredom betrays you, then stop... for excessive boredom diminishes much, and what is precious with annoyance becomes worthless. Thoughts are like springs: one draws from them little by little... thus you satisfy your need for refreshment and attain your benefit; but if you overuse them, their water dries up and their usefulness diminishes...”¹¹

What can be understood from this statement is that, in order to produce speech, the following steps must be followed:

- ☐ Bringing to mind the meanings intended to be expressed in the discourse.
- ☐ Selecting appropriate words that correspond to the meanings present in the mind.
- ☐ Choosing the appropriate time to construct the discourse, by selecting moments when one is at the peak of activity and avoiding states of fatigue and boredom.

Suitability of the Utterance to the Intended Meaning:

The teacher must carefully choose their words in order to convey the intended meaning. It is stated in **Al-Bayan wa Al-Tabyin**: "...that speech should be acceptable in intent, light on the tongue, and easy, as if it flowed from its source and emerged from its origin... Beware of roughness, for it leads to complexity, and complexity consumes your meanings and distorts your expressions. Whoever seeks a noble meaning... it is the right of such a meaning to preserve it from what may corrupt or disfigure it... You should know the value of meanings and balance them with the capacities of listeners, and with the circumstances; and know that benefit lies in the appropriateness to the situation and in what each Context requires of discourse."¹²

From this statement, it can be inferred that:

- The sender should choose words appropriate to the intended meaning.
- The expression should be easy in articulation.
- Rough or obscure expressions should be avoided so as not to lead to ambiguity and complexity that hinder communication.
- The value of meanings should be balanced with the capacities of listeners.
- The value of meanings should be balanced with the circumstances.
- Situations (*maqamat*) should be recognized and distinguished, and meanings and expressions chosen accordingly, as the listener is always present in any communicative act, even if only mentally.

Deliberation, Calmness, and Stillness:

The speaker's calmness and deliberation in speech help in conveying the message to the recipient in a way that influences and persuades them. Confusion and astonishment, on the other hand, lead to failure in delivering the message. Thus, "a sign of the speaker's composure and self-control is their calmness in speech and deliberation in expression."¹³

Scientific Competence in the Subject:

The teacher (sender) must be knowledgeable, well-informed, and aware of the subject they are addressing, as knowledge is a condition for benefiting the learner (receiver), engaging in dialogue, and influencing them. If the teacher does not possess sufficient knowledge, they will not be in a strong position within the communicative process, since they control the transmission and the type of information conveyed information that should be perceived by the receiver as beneficial. Otherwise, the communication loses its value, leading to negative reactions from the receiver, such as boredom and lack of interest in the discourse presented.

B- Linguistic Competence:

The teacher (sender) must acquire the skill of teaching language and is therefore required to possess correct linguistic competence in Arabic, which constitutes a fundamental aspect of communicative competence. This refers to knowing the system governing the language (grammar, morphology, phonetics, semantics, and lexicon) and applying it without conscious effort or deliberate reflection. A speaker cannot be truly proficient unless they speak naturally, having adequately mastered morphological forms, grammatical rules, semantic nuances, and expressive styles for communication.

C- Message Evaluation:

The ability to evaluate the message is a condition for successful communication, as it allows the identification of strengths and weaknesses in transmission, in order to avoid failure and reinforce success.

D- Ethics of Communication:

It is not sufficient for the teacher (sender) to possess scientific knowledge without also being aware of the ethics of interaction being humble in teaching rather than arrogant or condescending. The teacher must pay attention to the utterances used when addressing the learner (receiver), as these may be interpreted by the learner regardless of their linguistic meaning as either encouragement or discouragement of their intellectual effort and classroom participation.

E- Breadth of Knowledge and Cultural Literacy:

This refers to “continuous awareness of the developments in modern linguistic sciences, including phonetics, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.”¹⁴

2- Receiver / Learner:

The receiver is the one who receives the message of the sender/teacher, decodes it, understands its meanings, and interacts with it. If the teacher/sender is the creator and producer of discourse, giving it distinguishing characteristics, then the receiver is the one for whom the discourse is created and addressed. The receiver participates effectively in producing discourse, even if indirectly. For the success of the communicative process, the following must be present:

Linguistic Competence:

This refers to the receiver’s knowledge of the language used by the sender to convey the message, as well as their ability to analyze, synthesize, and perceive relationships between elements.

Active Listening:

If the receiver does not listen carefully to the speaker’s words, they will not grasp the communicative purpose of the discourse, for “if the addressee does not listen well, they will not perceive the meaning conveyed by the discourse...,”¹⁵ as good listening is one of the key factors for the success of the communicative process.

Attendance and Observation:

Seeing the sender is of great importance for the receiver in achieving communication and interaction, as it reveals the sender’s state while delivering discourse and practicing the teaching process, including signs of vitality, activity, or other indicative features. It also reflects the state of the discourse at the moment of its occurrence, with all its surrounding conditions and details. Learning by imitation “occurs when the learner observes the teacher in a particular action or behavior, and then imitates them or performs the same act.”¹⁶

Desire to Learn and Benefit from Learning:

Several factors influence this, including moral aspects, psychological state, and mental abilities, as well as the learner’s motivation and eagerness to engage in learning and benefit from it.

3- Discourse (Knowledge Content):

It is the axis of interaction between the sender and the receiver, and the product of their interaction. It represents the intellectual, cognitive, and aesthetic content that the sender seeks to convey to the receiver. Communication manifests itself in various forms and patterns, depending on the context in which the sender operates, the type of receiver addressed, and the surrounding circumstances. Accordingly, discourse may take the form of a word, a gesture, a symbol, etc. Among its characteristics is that, just as it carries the distinctive features of the speaker, it also reflects the nature of the listener for whom it is produced. Its structure varies according to the communicative purposes intended by the sender. The conditions for its construction include:

- Taking into account the state of the addressee.
- Avoiding contradiction in speech.
- Precision in expression.
- Coherent structure.

- Argumentation and justification.
- Suitability to the situation in which it is used between the speaker and the listener.
- Not being excessively long or tedious, so as to avoid boredom caused by verbosity, rhetorical excess, or lengthy introductions before addressing the main point.
- Being free from spelling errors in written communication, or grammatical and expressive errors in oral communication.
- Using the appropriate medium for its transmission, as discourse no matter how important is greatly influenced by the medium through which it is conveyed to the receiver; each type of discourse has its most effective medium.

4- Channel and Its Linguistic Regulations:

It is the medium through which the signals of the system are transmitted during the communication process, and through which the type of messages directed to learners is determined. It has been classified into two types: the first is a set of means for transmitting a signal from the place of emission to the place of reception, such as sound and hearing; the second is the system or speech used, such as air, vision, and material signaling means¹⁷For effective communication, it is required that its form be consistent with its content. Among its linguistic regulations are the following:¹⁸

- Its ability to convey the content, which is its primary function.
- Facilitating understanding and mutual comprehension, since the proper transmission of content to the receiver ensures their understanding of the message.
- Taking into account the cognitive level of the receiver; understanding cannot be achieved if the language used by the communication channel exceeds the receiver's mental capacity, just as it may be underestimated if it is perceived as below their level.

Among the most important means used are: written media (books), direct oral means, audio media (recordings), audiovisual media (video recordings), and modern electronic media (computers, the Internet).

5- Varieties of Communicative Context:

Context is considered one of the most important communicative elements, as it is the setting in which the roles of the previously mentioned educational communicative elements take place and are closely interconnected for the success of the communicative process. Taking context into account helps the teacher produce effective discourse, while the receiver's awareness of the communicative context aids in proper interpretation of the discourse and in grasping the speaker's intended meaning. As stated, "it is clear that the contexts of speech differ: the context of gratitude differs from that of complaint, the context of congratulation differs from that of condolence, the context of praise differs from that of blame, the context of encouragement differs from that of warning, and the context of seriousness differs from that of humor. Likewise, the context of initiating speech differs from that of responding to inquiry or denial, and the context of responding to a question differs from that of responding to denial. All of this is evident to any perceptive mind. Similarly, the context of speaking to an intelligent person differs from that of speaking to an unintelligent one, and each of these requires a different approach."¹⁹ Context here takes two forms:

- External context, related to: the receiver in terms of their educational, intellectual, and social level, and their reactions, including acceptance or rejection; the means of communication, whether oral or written; the general context; and the nature of the subject, which may be political, social, or otherwise, taking into account the receiver.
 - Internal context, related to the sender in terms of the intentions they seek to convey to the receiver.
- This can be summarized in the following diagram:

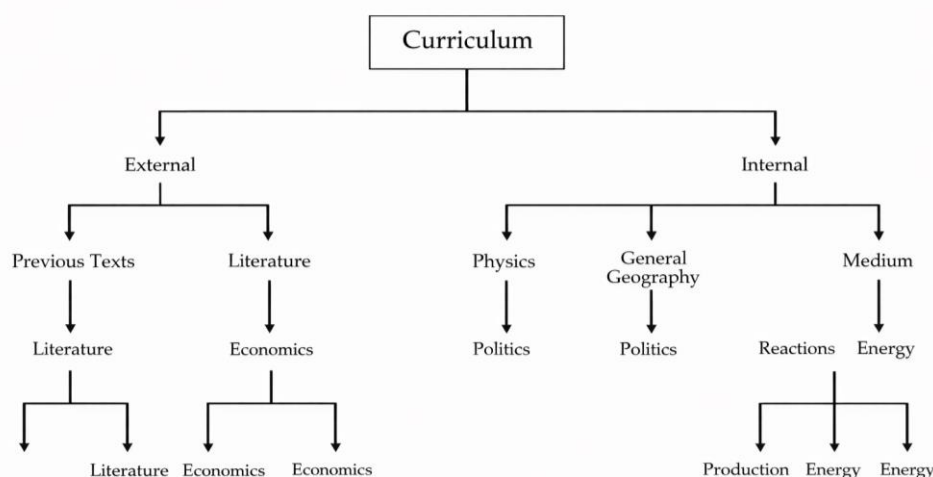
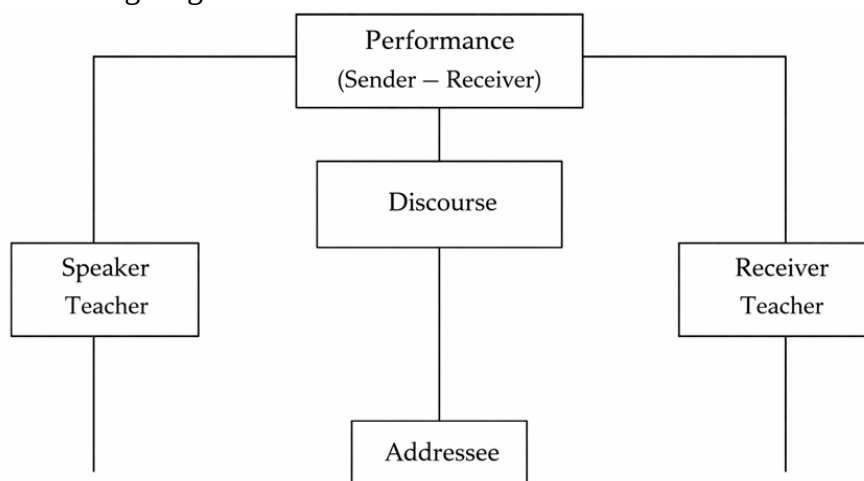


Diagram of the Sections of the Maqam

The previously mentioned pragmatic components in the communication process can also be illustrated in the following diagram:



The communicative approach, derived from pragmatic linguistics in the field of teaching and learning, has focused on developing the learner's communicative ability, activating their learning skills, achieving linguistic fluency, and enhancing their effectiveness in functional uses of language. Its proponents believe that it is not sufficient for the learner to be able to read and write sentences correctly; rather, they must acquire the ability to use these sentences and expressions in specific communicative situations.²⁰ Pragmatics is the field that does not limit itself to describing linguistic forms, but goes beyond that to describe them in the course of communication. It is "not a purely linguistic science in the traditional sense that merely describes and explains linguistic structures and stops at their limits and observable forms, but rather a new science of communication that studies linguistic phenomena in the context of use."²¹

The communicative study of language, inspired by the communicative approach, aims to enable the learner to acquire communicative competence that allows them to use the language they are learning in various situations and social contexts. This is achieved by introducing procedures and methods applied in practice, while taking into account the social and cultural dimensions of language.²² In addition to the necessity of respecting the social and cultural context when designing educational content, it is essential to create an appropriate learning context for the didactics of the Arabic language. This context is represented in a suitable school educational environment, as well as in the creation of a communicative teaching situation within the classroom.

1/ School Environment: “It refers to the set of things, people, and situations that influence the learner, are internalized by them, and are reflected in their practical, psychological, motor, social, and aesthetic behaviors within their school environment, and in the activities associated with it, whether inside or outside the school.”²³“The more a people become educated, the more they tend to adopt Arabic vocabulary in their speech and draw closer to Standard Arabic in their usage.”²⁴

2/ Educational Environment: “It includes the school community, the local environment, and perhaps the family climate, as well as what society provides in terms of resources that help create a suitable environment for the educational process to take place in the best possible way. Hence, the school and the institutions and media of culture must have a language that learners see and learn through.”²⁵ The more the school community uses and interacts through the language within the school environment, the easier it becomes to bring Standard Arabic closer to the learner and encourage its spontaneous and natural use.

In reality, the learner acquires the dialect within their family and social environment. When they go to school, they perceive Standard Arabic as unfamiliar, almost like a second language that does not represent them or express their feelings. To overcome this perception, Standard Arabic must be used within society, the family, and also in school settings among teachers, administrators, and staff, in order to break the barrier between the learner and Standard Arabic.

Conclusion:

At the end of this study, it has become clear that pragmatic components constitute a fundamental pillar in the communicative process of teaching the Arabic language, as they contribute to enhancing understanding and interaction between the learner and the teacher, and move language from the realm of structural rigidity to the space of social and contextual interaction. Speech intentions, contexts, presuppositions, speech acts, and other pragmatic concepts enable learners to grasp implicit meanings and use language in real-life situations.

The study has shown that integrating the pragmatic dimension into Arabic language didactics not only improves communicative skills but also deepens linguistic and cultural awareness, making the learning process more comprehensive and effective. It has also been noted that the success of this approach requires updating curricula, training teachers in pragmatic approaches, and providing educational environments that foster genuine communication.

Thus, it can be said that reconsidering the teaching of the Arabic language from a pragmatic perspective is no longer an option, but an urgent necessity to keep pace with developments in language teaching and to meet the needs of learners in the modern era.

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