Investigating the Impact of PragmaticsonCommunicative Competence Models: A Historical-Descriptive Study

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Abstract:

This study attempts to explore the role of pragmatics in reinforcing the process of discourse production and comprehension. The paper starts with the delimitation of the scope of pragmatics and the identification of its main constituents, such as implicature, presupposition, speech acts, the context of situation, reference, deixis, and entailments. Then, it turns to the description of the way in which pragmatics has gradually been incorporated in three significant communicative competence models. In doing so, this paper incorporates the techniques of the historical-descriptive methods. The results of the study revealed that the integration of pragmatic elements in language analysis/teaching could contribute to the comprehension of speaker's/writer's implicated meaning.

Keywords: Context; Communicative Competence, Discourse; Implicature; Pragmatics; Speech Acts

1- Introduction

The consideration of intended meaning and the requirements of the context in the production and interpretation of oral and written discourse started to be incorporated in linguistic analysis since the early seventies (Hymes, 1972; Leech, 1983: Savignon, 1972; Widdowson, 1978). Unlike structural and transformational generative grammars, which link the study of language to the observed structures of sentences, pragmatics focuses on the analysis of speakers'/writers' intended meaning, how the context affects this meaning, and it also examines how listeners, or readers can make sense of this meaning (Grice, 1975; Mey, 1980; Yule, 1996). In its explanation of how utterances can have meaning in situations, pragmatics highlights the role of implicature, speech acts, presuppositions, reference, entailments, and deictic expressions. Equally important, the rise of sociolinguistics witnessed the incorporation of pragmatics as a fundamental constituent of communicative competence models (Alderson, 2006; Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Halliday, 1970, 1973, 2004).

The main aim of the study is to highlight the role of pragmatics in the production and comprehension of discourse, and to explain how it can facilitate the mutual interaction, whether amongst members of the same speech community, or between foreign language learners from different communities.

In order to attain these objectives, the research tends to answer the following questions: How can we determine speaker meaning? What are the pragmatic constituents that reinforce speakers' intended meaning in foreign language classes? To what extent do the requirements of the context facilitate mutual interaction? What strategies do the hearers/learners' use to comprehend the addressed discourse? To what degree does the

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concept of distance shape the creation of discourse? And how much can the listeners' ability infer meaning ascribed to the rules of discourse alone?

Since this paper focuses on tracing the chronological integration of pragmatics in language analysis/teaching and on describing the incorporation of its constituents in communicative competence models, we find it logical to employ the techniques of the historical-descriptive methods in the analysis of the relevant information.
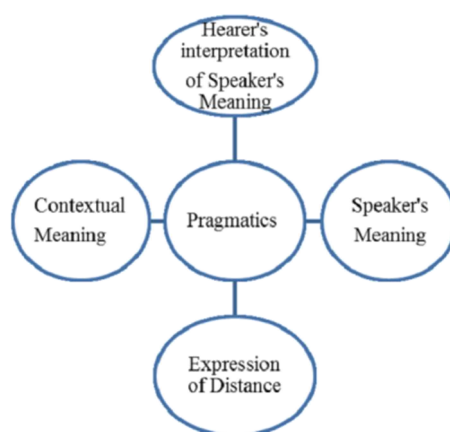
2. Definition of Pragmatics

Paltridge (2012) offers a very comprehensive definition of pragmatics, which links speakers' or writers' meaning to the context in which speech takes place or the text is written. In the same perspective, the interpretation of the written or oral discourse relies on the degree to which communication participants share the use of pragmatic knowledge constituents and contextual features:

> Pragmatics is the study of meaning in relation to the context in which a person is speaking or writing. This includes social, situational, and textual context. It also includes background context: that is, what people know about each other and about the world. Pragmatics assumes that when people communicate with each other they normally follow some kind of co-operative principle; that is, they have a shared understanding of how they should co-operate in their communications (p.38).

3- Types of Meaning in Pragmatics

We can identify four areas of meaning that pragmatics highlights (see fig 1): speakers'/writers' meaning, contextual meaning, the extent of what is communicated as well as the expression of relative distance. In other words, how close is the hearer to the listener? Speakers' communicated meaning explains what speakers intend to convey beyond the structural form of utterances, or written discourse. Equally important, the role of listeners in the interpretation of discourse is of great significance. Additionally, the situational context as the setting where language use takes place can reinforce mutual understanding. As for the expression of relative distance, it pinpoints to the extent to which the listener is close to, or distant from the speaker. The consideration of this aspect enables speakers to determine how much to be said so that their intended meaning can appropriately be interpreted (Brown & Yule, 1983; Leech, 1983; Yule, 1996).

Fig 1. Types of Meaning

Source: Yule, 1996, p. 4.

4- **Elements of Pragmatics**

As we have mentioned in the definition of pragmatics, speaker's meaning, contextual meaning and the hearer's interpretation of meaning require the awareness of some constituents, which contribute to the clarification of the created discourse. These include the implicature, speech acts, presupposition, reference, entailment, and deixis [see fig 2]. The use of such terms enables the discourse analyst to describe "what speakers and hearers are doing, and not the relationship which exist between one sentence or proposition and another" (Brown and Yule, 1983, 27)**.**

Fig 2. Elements of Pragmatics
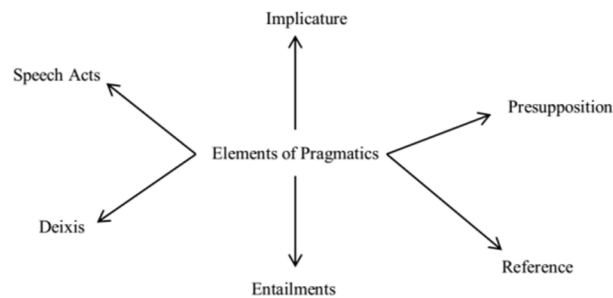
Organized from Brown &Yule, 1983, p. 27.

4-1. Implicature

In pragmatics, the term *'Implicature'* refers to the meaning that speakers intend to convey beyond what the linguistic forms of their utterances imply. This element can be defined as the "component of speaker meaning that constitutes an aspect of what is meant in a speaker's utterance without being part of what is said" (Horn, 2006, p. 1). Let us, for example, say that A has invited B for a walk at the Public Park. B answers that it was raining outside. The formal structure of B's utterance is linked to the fall of the rain, which does not have any relevance to A's offer. However, B's answer could mean a rejection to A's offer, which, of course, refers to the distinction between what is 'said' and what is 'meant'. To highlight the difference between the 'said' and the 'meant' Greece (1975) provides this explanation:

> Suppose that A and B are talking about a mutual friend, C, who is now working in a bank. A asks B how C is getting on in his job, and B replies, Oh quite well, I think; he likes his colleagues, and he hasn't been to prison yet. At this point, A might well inquire what Bwas implying, what he was suggesting, or even what hemeant by saying that C had not yet been to prison. The answer might be any one of such things as that C is the sort of person likely to yield to the temptation provided by his occupation, that C' s colleague' are really very unpleasant and treacherous people, and so forth. It might, of course, be unnecessary for A to make such an inquiry of B, the answer to it being, in the context, clear in advance. I think it is clear that whatever B implied, suggested, meant, etc., in this example, is distinct from what B said, which was simply that C had not been to prison yet (p. 44).

In this context, Greece (1975) identifies two types of '*implicature*': conventional and conversational. The former defines 'what is said' in terms of words while the latter attempts to explain 'what is implicated' in terms of meaning beyond the surface structure of the utterance. To clarify this point, let us consider what 'A' and 'B' say.
A: You did not attend the meeting, didn't you?
B: Oh! There was heavy traffic jam on the highway.

The conventional meaning of 'there *was a heavy traffic jam on the highway*' implies that there was traffic congestion on the same road. Contrariwise, the conversational meaning can turn this utterance into an 'apology' for not attending the meeting; or to a protest or complaint against the traffic congestion on the relevant road.

4-2.   Maxims of Conversation

Grice (1975) distinguishes four maxims of conversation: quality, quantity, manner and relevance (Meibauer, 2006) each of which contributes to the mutual understanding between speakers and hearers.

4-2.1. Maxim of Quantity

When one engages in any form of interaction, as a speaker, one needs to provide as much information as is required so that the hearer could grasp the meaning clearly.

4-2.2. Maxim of Quality

This maxim requires communication participants not to provide information more than what is required. Furthermore, interactants are recommended not to say what they believe to be false for the purpose of making their contribution true.

4-.2.3. Maxim of Manner

Utterances or texts need to be perspicuous. In other words, speech needs to be clearly expressed and easily understood and well-arranged by avoiding "obscurity of expression, ambiguity, and unnecessary prolixity" (Cruse, 2006, p. 103).

4-2.3. Maxim of Relevance

We can explain the requirements of this maxim by the following example. The answer to the question "what's the date?" in a history class could be "July, 5, 1962", which points to the Independence Day of Algeria. However, the same answer can be irrelevant, if the question is on the date in a given bank, which implies that the questioner wants to know what date it is today as a requirement for his filling out the bank form.

4-.3. Speech Acts

A speech act can be seen as "a functional unit in communication" (Cohen, 1996, p. 384). This concept has been proposed by the philosopher J. L, Austin (1962), mainly in his book *'How to do Things with Words'*. The term is now used by Speech Act Theory, which focuses on the analysis of "the role of utterances in relation to the behaviour of speaker and hearer in interpersonal communication. It is…a communicative activity…defined with reference to the intentions of speakers while speaking…and the effects they achieve on listeners" (Cristal, 2008, 446). The role of utterances and the effect they have on interactants can be explained with reference to Austin's (1962) categorization of speech acts. According to the author, utterances have three types of meaning: the propositional/locutionary, illocutionary meaning as well as the perlocutionary force. The first type refers to the literal meaning of utterances. For example, if one student says, "it is cold here in the class", the locutionary interpretation of his utterance can be linked to the temperature of the local where he is studying. Nerveless, these utterances have also illocutionary meanings, which refer to their social function. Accordingly, the speech act "it is cold here in the class" can be understood as a request to turn on the heater or to shut the classroom door, or windows. If the same student repeats this utterance emphatically, it can sound as a complaint (Halliday &Hasan, 1976). Now, if the student's request leads to the action of turning on the heater or shutting the windows or the door, we can speak of "the notion of *perlocutionary force,* that is, the result or effect that is produced by the utterance in that given context" (Cohen, 1996, p. 384, italics in original).

4.3.1. Categories of Speech Acts

Speech acts can be organized into five categories: representatives, directives, expressives, commissives, and declaratives (Austin, 1962; Cohen, 1996; Cristal, 2008). In the first category 'representatives', we can find assertions, claims, and reports. As for 'directives', these describe speech acts articulating suggestions, requests and commands. Concerning expressives, they tend to delineate apologies, complaints, as well as thanks. The fourth type 'commissives', which commits speakers to do, or perform something in the future, encompasses promises and threats, and the last type 'declaratives' includes decrees and declarations. A declarative speech act refers to the utterances "which change [sic] the state of affairs in the world. For example, during the wedding ceremony the act of marriage is performed when the phrase *I now pronounce you man and wife* is uttered" (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 543, Italics in original).

4-4. Presuppositions

Presuppositions can be defined as "the common ground that is assumed to exist between language users such as assumed knowledge of a situation and/or of the world" (Paltridge,2012, p.43). As explained in the definition, when the speaker produces a piece of discourse, it is based on his assumption of what the hearer knows, is likely to know, or he will infer from what the speaker says. Paltridge highlights that "[i]t is indeed because people make this assumption that discourse (normally) proceeds as smoothly as it does" (p.44, [parentheses in original]).

Two types of presuppositions can be identified in the field of pragmatics: conventional and pragmatic. The former are less context-dependent and linked to language forms. For example, the offer "would you like some dates?" implies that the dates are ready to be served. Inversely, when we are invited by a friend for lunch, the question "what would you like to eat for lunch?" implies that nothing has been prepared yet for us. Returning to pragmatic presuppositions, which are interpreted in terms of their connection to the context they occur in. In some government administrations in Algeria, visitors are required to take tickets from ticket machines and wait their turn to be served. Therefore, when number five, for instance, is called upon, the person having ticket 5 presupposes that this is an offer for him to be served.
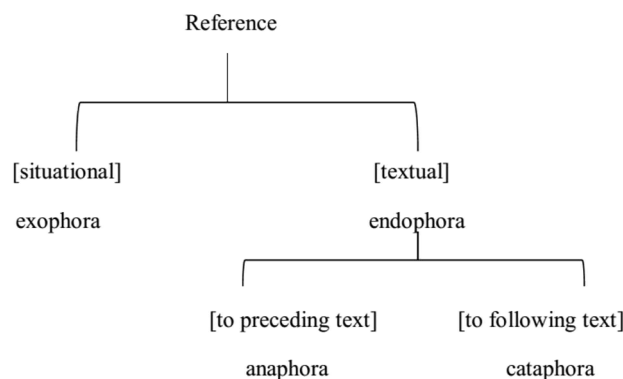
4-5. Reference

In pragmatics, a 'reference' occurs when one or more specific individual entities such as persons, things, places, times, objects, units, and so on are referred to. For example, in the sentence 'I met the President here last week', we can identify four references: I (person), the President (person), here (location), and last week (time). Of course, for more understanding between the speaker and the hearer, the latter needs to "pick up the correct 'referent' (that is, the entity referred to). A successful definite referring expression must contain enough information to allow the hearer to exclude all potential referents except the correct one" (Cruse, 2006, p. 43, italics in original).

The property of reference means that "instead of being interpreted semantically in their own right, [language items]…make reference to something else for their interpretation. In English these items are personals, demonstratives and comparatives." (Halliday &Hasan, 1976, p. 31). References "are directives indicating that information is to be retrieved from elsewhere" (p. 31).

As we can see in fig 3, a reference can be identified as exophoric or endophoric. The former suggests that the referent object can be found in the context of situation, that is, not mentioned in the text. Conversely, an endophoric reference is text-dependent and identified in

the text itself. Endophoric references are also divided into two types: anaphoric and cataphoric. Reference to a previous part of the discourse is called anaphora, while reference to a later part of the discourse is called cataphora (Brown & Yule, 1983; Cristal, 2008; Halliday &Hasan, 1976).

Fig 3: Types of Reference

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                        Reference
                            |
            ┌───────────────┴───────────────┐
       [situational]                    [textual]
        exophora                        endophora
                              ┌─────────────┴─────────────┐
                        [to preceding text]        [to following text]
                            anaphora                   cataphora
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Source: Halliday &Hasan, 1976, p. 33

4-5.1. Dexis

Deixis, also known as deictic expressions, is a subtype of reference. These expressions can be thought of as "expressions which 'point to' their referents....The term 'deixis'…most typically…designates referring expressions which indicate the location of referents along certain dimensions, using the speaker (and time and place of speaking) as a reference point or 'deictic centre'" (*Cruse*, 2006, p. 44, [parentheses in original). A deixis can be introduced with the use of *this*and *that*. For example, the request 'can you pass me **that** glass of water?' means that the glass in question is not close to the speaker's location. However, as soon as the speakers receives the glass of water, "any further reference to it will require a different deictic element" (p. 44).

4-5.2. Entailments

An entailment is a term drawn from logic, which implies that the truthfulness of one proposition is built upon the truthfulness of the previous proposition (Crystal, 2008; Lyons, 1970). For example, I can see a man coming; I can see a human being coming. Or, Mary bought a dog; Mary bought an animal. This implies that one cannot confirm the first proposition and reject the second since a 'man' is, in fact, a human being, and a dog is really an animal. Lyons (1970) explains that a sentence or a proposition "is entailed by another if it follows analytically from it: e.g. John has killed Peter entails (or ' implies ') Peter is dead" (p. 320, [parentheses in original]). According to Cristal (2008), an entailment "refers to a relation between a pair of propositions such that the truth of the second proposition necessarily follows from (**is entailed by**) the truth of the first" (pp. 169-170, [emphasis in original]).

5- The Integration of Pragmatics in Communicative Competence Models

This section examines the inclusion of pragmatics in three communicative competence models proposed respectively proposed by Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1980) and Bachman and Palmer (1996). These models have not been chosen randomly. Dell Hymes has been acknowledged as the founder of sociolinguistics and the first linguist who incorporated the requirements of the social context and the intentions of speakers in his model (Widdowson, 1978). Ten years later, Canale and Swain (1980) extended Hymes' model with the incorporation of sociocultural and discourse rules along with the communication strategies, which enable the speakers to modify their speech behavior according to the changes affecting the context. As for the choice of Bachman and Palmer's model, the latter has been recognized as the broadest framework, which outlines the role of both sociolinguistic

competence and pragmatic competence in the creation and reception of discourse (Alderson 2000).

5-1. Hymes' model of Communicative Competence

In reaction to the structural and generative linguistic theories (De Saussure; 1959; Chomsky, 1965), which exclude the features of social context in their language analysis, Hymes (1972) developed a communicative competence model comprising four sectors: possibility, feasibility, appropriateness, and occurrence. Possibility investigates the extent to which utterances can conform to the rules of grammar. Concerning feasibility, it examines the effect of psycholinguistic features relevant to "memory limitation, perceptual device, effects of properties such as nesting, embedding, branching, and the like "on the ability of communication (Hymes, 1972, p. 285). Turning nowto the most important constituent of Hymes' communicative competence, which is appropriateness. The latter highlights the role of pragmatics in the exchange of communication. Appropriateness "seems to suggest readily the required sense of relation to contextual features" (p. 285). Consequently, taking part in speech events and evaluating their accomplishments by others (hearers) requires competence, which is fed by social experience. In other words, the success of a given interaction relies upon "competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner" (p. 277). Returning now to Hymes' fourth constituent of his CC 'occurrence'. This refers to the extent to which some speech acts are really done, or performed in a given speech community. The consideration of this aspect can contribute to mutual understanding amongst the participants from different linguistic communities.

5-2.   Canale and Swain's Model

Building upon Hymes (1967, 1972, 1996), Savignon (1972) Widdowson (1978, 1979), Canale and Swain (1980) propose a tripartite model of communicative competence comprising grammatical, sociolinguistic, and communication strategies (CS), which they call 'strategic competence' (see fig. 4). Grammatical competence includes "knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence- grammar semantics, and phonology" (p.29). Sociolinguistic competence, which the authors consider "crucial in interpreting utterances for social meaning, particularly when there is a low level of transparency between the literal meaning of an utterance and the speaker's intention" (p. 30) is subdivided into two sets of rules: sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse. The first set of rules specifies the way in which utterances are produced and received appropriately according to speech events delineated by Hymes (1967). Speech events, which can be understood as the "activities or aspects of activities that are governed directly by rules of language use" (Canale and Swain, 1980, p.17) are defined in terms of their constitutive components encompassing participants, setting, scene, actual form of message, topic, purpose, key (serious/mock), norm of interaction, norms of interpretation, and genre. As for discourse rules, these are described in terms of cohesion and coherence. The third component of Canale and Swain's (CS) which, they label 'strategic competence' is made of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies. Interactants resort to these strategies to "compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence" (p. 29).

Fig 4. Canale and Swains' Model of Communicative Competence

Source: Drawn from Canale and Swain, 1980, p. 30

5-3. Bachman and Palmer's Model of Language Ability

Bachman and Palmer's (1996) Communicative language ability (CLA) refers to the production and comprehension of discourse. This ability is made up of three competencies: language knowledge, pragmatic knowledge and strategic competence. Language knowledge delineates the participants' actual knowledge of the grammatical system of their language (phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics), which is spontaneous for language use. Pragmatic knowledge or competence can be defined as the successful production and interpretation of discourse with reference to utterances and textual meanings, to the intentions of language users and the characteristics of the context. Concerning strategic competence, it refers to the mental processes, which enable language knowledge to interact with the components of pragmatic knowledge for the purposes of creating discourse. Since this paper is concerned with the role of pragmatics in reinforcing the creation and comprehension of discourse, our focus will be laid on pragmatic competence rather than on linguistic competence.

5-3.1. Pragmatic Competence

Bachman and Palmer (1996) consider pragmatic competence as the "successful production and interpretation of discourse with reference to utterances and textual meanings, to the intentions of language users and the characteristics of the context" (p. 70). As fig 5. indicates, the authors divide this competence into two types of knowledge: sociolinguistic and functional knowledge. We will further explain what each competence means and on what constituents it is built.

Fig 5. The Constituents of Bachman and Palmer's Pragmatic Competence
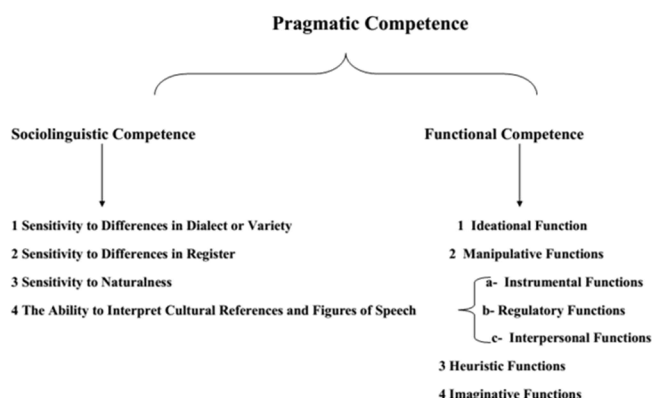
Source: Organized from Bachman and Palmer, 1996, pp. 66, 68, &70.

5-3.2. Sociolinguistic Competence

Sociolinguistic competence, which enables us "to create or interpret language that is appropriate to a particular language setting"(Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 70) requires knowledge of, or sensitivity to the social conventions that determine the appropriate use of dialects, registers, naturalness or idiomatic expressions and the ability of interpreting cultural references and figures of speech.

5-3.3. Functional/Ideational Competence

Functional competence "enables us to interpret the relationship between utterances or sentences and texts and the intentions of language users" (Bachman &Palmer, 1996, p. 69). As fig 5 above illustrates, this competence covers four types of functions: ideational, manipulative, instrumental, and imaginative functions. First, ideational functions enable communication participants "to express or interpret meaning in terms of [their] experience of the real world" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 69). The utterances, which bear these functions

include but not limited to expressing one's feelings, exchanging ideas on a given topic, descriptions, explanations, and so on. Second, we can speak of manipulative functions that tend to influence the world around us. These functions are organized into three sets: instrumental, regulatory, and interpersonal functions. Instrumental functions include two sub-types. One sub-type is used to get people do things for us, such as requests, suggests, commands and warnings. The other sub-type is used when people express their intention of doing something such as offers, promises, or threats. Regulatory functions, which include prohibitions and obligations tend "to control the behavior of other people" (Halliday, 1973, p. 18**)** according to the force of law, the institutional regulations or social norms. Turning now to the interpersonal functions, which enable us to maintain, change or break relationship with other people. These include salutations, giving permission to engage in doing something, leave taking, compliments, or apologies**.** Third, heuristic functions allow communication participants to develop their perception of the world around them by the use of language for teaching/learning, for memorizing and retaining information, or for problem solving. Fourth, Imaginativefunctions qualify "us to use language to create an imaginary world or extend the world around us for humorous or esthetic purposes" (Bachman & palmer, 1996, p. 69).

6- Conclusion

In this paper, we have reviewed the literature relevant to pragmatics and its incorporation as a main constituent of communicative competence models. The study attempted to delimit the scope of the field and highlighted its contribution to the comprehension of written and oral discourse. In doing so, the research focused on the analysis of the pragmatic elements, such implicature, presupposition, speech acts, reference, entailments and deictic expressions, and, how they reinforce speaker meaning, contextual meaning and the hearer's interpretation of this meaning (Allott, 2010; Baker &Ellece, 2011; Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Halliday, 1970, 1973, 2004).

The other section of the article was devoted to the incorporation of pragmatics in communicative competence models. We started with Dell Hymes (1970) underlining his integration of the intentions of speakers and the conditions of the context in his framework. Then, we turned to Canale and Swain (1980) explaining the role of their sociocultural and discourse rules in the interpretation of meaning. The research concluded with Bachman and Palmer (1996) highlighting how sociolinguistic and functional competencies enable the created discourse to be more comprehensible (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007). Though, the elements of pragmatics, such as implicature, presupposition, reference, deixis, and entailments are not explicitly mentioned in these competence models, they are deeply imbedded in the speakers', or writers' intended meaning, the requirements of the context or the text, and how the hearers' or readers interpret this meaning (Campbell & Wales, 1970; Grundy, 2008; Mey, 2009).

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