

# **بحث نظري في التداولية النقدية**

**الأستاذ الدكتور**

**فريد حميد الهنداوي**

**جامعة بابل - كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية**

**الأستاذ المساعد الدكتور**

**علاء باجي جبور الخزعلي**

**جامعة الكوفة - كلية التربية للبنات**

## **A Theoretical Survey on Critical Pragmatics**

**Prof Dr. Fareed Hameed Al-Hindawi**

**Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences**

**University of Babylon**

**alhindawi3@gmail.com**

**Asst. Prof. Alaa Baji Jebur Al-Khazali**

**Department of English, College of Education for Girls**

**University of Kufa**

**alaab.alkhuzai@uokufa.edu.iq**

**Abstract**

Critical pragmatics is a sub field of sociopragmatics that works in the fashion of critical discourse analysis. According to the perspective view, macro pragmatics is divided into three groups, the cognitively oriented, the socially and/or culturally oriented and the third group is for issues that cannot be fit within either of the other two groups. Here, the socially oriented group is concerned with social issues such power, language, and ideology considering that power and ideology as socially oriented issues. Within this framework critical pragmatics has come to existence. The present paper presents a theoretical survey about critical pragmatics, its origins and main approaches. More specifically, the aim of the paper is to provide an answer to the following questions: What is critical pragmatics? and what are its origins and main approaches ?

Subsequently, to achieve the aim of study, a theoretical survey about critical pragmatics and its origins is conducted, in addition to the main approaches in the field. Moreover, the study has dealt with the work on critical pragmatics by Korta and Perry (2011) and showed that this work has nothing to do critical pragmatics meant to deal with social practices but the name. The paper has concluded that the seeds of critical pragmatics are originated in Mey's (1979) and the main approaches to the field are Habermass (1979) and Mey (2011).

**Keywords:** Critical pragmatics; criticality, Habermass; Mey.

**المستخلص**

التداولية النقدية هي مجال فرعي للتداولية الاجتماعية التي تعمل بأسلوب تحليل الخطاب النقدي. وفقاً لوجهة النظر هذه، تنقسم التداولية الكلية إلى ثلاث مجموعات، ذات التوجه المعرفي، والموجهة اجتماعياً و / أو ثقافياً والمجموعة الثالثة مخصصة للقضايا التي لا يمكن أن تتناسب مع أي من المجموعتين الأخرين. هنا، تهتم المجموعة ذات التوجه الاجتماعي بالقضايا الاجتماعية مثل السلطة واللغة والأيدولوجية معتبرين أن هذه القوة والأيدولوجية من القضايا ذات التوجه الاجتماعي. في هذا الإطار ظهرت التداولية النقدية إلى الوجود. يقدم هذا البحث مسحاً نظرياً حول التداولية النقدية وأصولها ومقارباتها الرئيسية. وبشكل أكثر تحديداً، فإن الهدف من البحث هو تقديم إجابة على الأسئلة التالية: ما هي التداولية النقدية؟ وما هي أصولها ومقارباتها الرئيسية؟

بعد ذلك، لتحقيق هدف الدراسة، يتم إجراء مسح نظري حول التداولية النقدية وأصولها، بالإضافة إلى المناهج الرئيسية في هذا المجال. علاوة على ذلك، تناولت الدراسة العمل على التداولية النقدية لكورتا وبيري (٢٠١١) وأظهرت أن هذا العمل ليس له علاقة بالبراغماتية النقدية التي تهدف إلى التعامل مع الممارسات الاجتماعية سوى الاسم. خلص البحث إلى أن بذور التداولية النقدية نشأت في Mey's (1979) وأن المناهج الرئيسية لهذا المجال هي Habermass (1979) و Mey (2011).

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** البراغماتية النقدية،

النقدية، هابرماس، مي

## **1. Introduction**

A number of studies has affirmed that pragmatics is a useful tool in doing critical analysis of discourse. Hence, critical studies have always been including a pragmatic aspect to deal with such issues of ideology and power in various data, for example Oswald (2014) and Croom (2015). Critical pragmatic in itself requires a multidimensional framework of analysis for several reasons: first, it works in the fashion of critical discourse analysis and adopts its methods in the analysis of text and discourse. Second, because it is a pragmatic work, then it needs to follow the pragmatic features of text and utilize them in the analysis of matters that are related to power equality and ideology. And third, it is a subfield of critical linguistics so, methods of stance, critique, and reproduction can also be used in critical pragmatics.

Accordingly, critical pragmatics is a field of study that focuses on the analysis of ideology and power abuse issues such as racism, linguisticism, sexism, Americanism, and so on. Pragmatic strategies of speech act, implicature, presupposition and Grice's maxims within the framework of critical pragmatics are analyzed as the linguistic tools through which an ideology is represented and enacted in text or discourse.

## **2. Origins**

Generally speaking, pragmatics can be traced back within two main schools of thought, namely: The Anglo-American school and the European continental school. In terms of the traditions of the former, pragmatics, inevitably, goes in line with the conception of linguistics and philosophy of language of the school of thought and is defined as "the systemic study of meaning by virtue of, or dependent on the use of language. The central topics of inquiry include implicature, presupposition, speech acts, deixis, reference, and context, in addition to the division of labor between, and the interaction of pragmatics and semantics" (Huang, 2017: 2).

Approaching pragmatics in this way is referred to as the component view of pragmatics. This view is based on the idea that linguistics theory comprises a set of core components in which each component has its own territory of inquiry. Accordingly, pragmatics is just one of these components within linguistics as it contrasts with other components such as phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics ... etc. As such, there are two main theories within the pragmatic component, they are Cricean pragmatic theory and relevance theory (ibid: 3).

On the other hand, pragmatics within the European Continental camp and conception of linguistics represents a perspective to linguistics rather than a core component of it. It is a perspective on all other linguistic components. Thus, Verschueren (1999:11) adopts that “pragmatics is general functional (i.e. cognitive, social, and cultural) perspective on linguistics phenomena in relation to their usage in terms of behavior. It should be seen as specific perspective on whatever phonologists, morphologists, syntacticians, semanticists, psycholinguists, sociolinguists, etc. deal with”.

Viewing pragmatics in this way is what referred to as the perspective view pragmatics in which it represents a functional perspective that can be utilized in relation to all core components of linguistics as well as to fields that are hyphenated to the core of linguistic theory (Huang, 2017: 3).

As a consequence, perspective pragmatics has widened the work of pragmatics on macro levels as well as with neighboring disciplines like sociology, psychology, computer and artificial intelligence and so on. This doesn't mean that micro pragmatics is static and has no advances. Macro pragmatics as elaborated by Huang (2017: 4-15) is divided into three groups, the first group is cognitively oriented, the second group is socially and/or culturally oriented and the third group is allocated for those studies that cannot be classified according to either of the previous two groups.

As far as critical pragmatics is concerned, it has its roots in the orbit of sociopragmatics alongside social deixis, social conventions of speech acts, and social factors that can cause embedment to language in use. The fashion of societal pragmatics, from macro pragmatics point of view, also includes any area that has, in one way or another, a relation to society, so that the sociopragmatic topics are as diverse as language. One of those topics is the social struggle that has a relation to language issues, and this is the main focus of critical pragmatics (ibid: 9). Critical pragmatics “refers to the work done in socio-pragmatics that follows the tradition of critical linguistics, in particular critical discourse analysis. In critical pragmatics great emphasis is put on the relationship between language and social power, and between language and ideology” (ibid.). Basically, the term is originated from an essay by Mey (1979) entitled *Toward a Critical Theory of Language*, in which a variety of social problems as

they are related to language are approached in a Theoretical-Marxian orientation. Nearly at the same time, Roger Fowler and his colleagues among them are Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress presented their work on critical linguistics at the University of East Anglia. This work is also launched in a Marxian orientation to approach sociological and pragmatics issues (Mey, 2017: 147-148).

Huang (2017: 9) declares that it is of great importance to note here that in the philosophy of language and formal pragmatics the term critical pragmatics has completely a different meaning. It is a term used by Korta and Perry (2011) in their book *Critical Pragmatics: An Inquiry into Reference and Communication* in which critical pragmatics refers to the philosophical status of the content of an utterance as central and critical in pragmatics and semantics alike.

### **2.1 Limiting Criticality**

Due to the diversity of critical theories and the plurality of scholars and proponents, it becomes that limiting the meaning of critical is a challenging task. Critical theories are neither homogenous nor they are static since they can advance and shift with the time, they have in common mutual supportive relations among them, and with other cultural and social studies (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000: 155)

In spite of the fact that there is no agreed upon definition of the term “critical” there available certain criteria and principles which are common to any critical study. These can comprise some or all of the following criteria depending on the nature of the work under examination and the approach that is followed:

- A. “Society is stratified and marked by inequality with differential structural access to material and symbolic resources.
- B. The power arrangements are asymmetrical.
- C. There is a reciprocal, mutually constitutive relationship between social structures and human agency.
- D. Social structures mediate social practices but do not determine them.
- E. Society, power, agency and culture do not exist atemporally but are sociohistorically situated.
- F. There is no such thing as value free research all knowledge is interested.
- G. It is not enough to simply describe any inequality it must be transformed through sustained critique and direct action” (Talmy, 2010: 219).

### 3. Main Approaches

Although the work in critical pragmatics is not as wide spread as other approaches of pragmatic or critical studies, but still there are major works in the field. Those approaches are as follows:

#### 3.1 Habermas (1984)

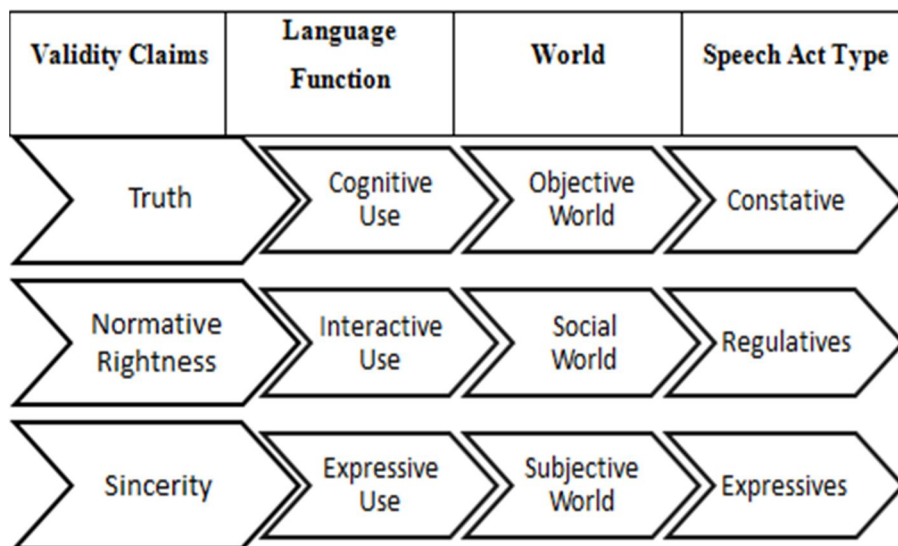
Cummings (2010: P) claims that as a social theorist rather than a linguist, Habermas can be regarded as the most influential scholar to identify the relationship between pragmatics and power. He gradually implants the study of language in a general theory of social action soil through the work on “universal pragmatics”. In this work, the concept of power is fundamental for pragmatics. One of the most significant distinctions that Habermas made is between “communicative discourse” and “strategic discourse”. The former is understanding-oriented, whereas the latter is power oriented. Strategic discourse carries power throughout the systems of linguistic constraints which are mostly found in institutional discourse. So, communicative discourse is going to be distorted by power and inequality. In fact, Habermas (1984:328) points out that “formal (universal) pragmatics which in its constructive intention is directed to the universal presuppositions of communicative action – seems to be hopelessly removed from actual language use”.

Thompson (1984: 280) reflects that Habermas defines his task much more broadly than Grice as that of elaborating a theoretical account which will link communicative action to crucial aspects of social reality and so provide means of comprehending the essential nature of modern industrial societies. Instead of conversational maxims, Habermas proposes a series of “validity claims”, which act, similarly, as a set of general principles on which all communication is based.

Habermas has constituted a set of “validity claims” which represent general principles on the communication map. He asserts that validity claim as “equivalent to the assertion that the conditions for the validity of an utterance are fulfilled” (ibid: 38). A speaker is apt to raising number of validity claims whenever s/he is performing a speech act. They can be challenged by the other interlocutor (listener or reader). In order to take the speech act as agreed upon, the listener or reader in this case accepts the validity claims made. The validity claims of Habermas are of three types which he considers as universal, they are: (1) Claims to truth, (2) Normative rightness, and (3) Sincerity. The three validity claims are

based on one key validity claim which is called “comprehensibility” that represents a major claim related to the use of language in communication. The three validity claims are connected to three functions of language proposed by Habermas . The functions are the cognitive, the interactive, and the expressive respectively. As a matter of fact, these three uses of language are related to Habermas own ontology in which he dissects reality into three worlds, the objective, the social, and the subjective (Habermas , 1984: 38).

The validity claims are related to functions of language and each one of them belongs to one world. Besides, Habermas proclaims that all claims are inherent in all speech acts. Interlocutors when speaking relate to all of these worlds or “they come to appearance together” (Habermas, 1979: 68). In the analysis of validity claims, Habermas has reformulated the classes of speech acts of Searle (1979). He narrows the classes into four: Constatives, regulatives and expressives, in addition to a fourth class which he considers a strategic one and is performed when there are no validity claims only claims to power. Figure (1) below illustrates how each claim is related to a special world and represented by certain speech act:



**Figure (1): Validity Claims as Related to Realities, Language Functions, and Speech Acts.**



When social actors communicate, they resort to the three validity claims. First, the truthfulness of the propositional content or the factual assertions as part of what a speaker says. Second, refers to speakers' social and moral right to say their communicative contributions in accordance with the norms of a given context. And third, the degree of sincerity in the speaker utterance and it is not aimed at deceiving the hearer. If all three validity claims are fulfilled and can be defended, an undistorted form of communication is achieved. This is what Habermas refers to as ideal speech situation" (Sinclair, 2005: 228-229).

Though social interaction is not working in an ideal way like this and that language is always ideologized for power and dominance conflicts, the importance of an ideal speech situation lies in the fact that it stands as foundation for all speech acts, according to which distorted communication can be measured, uncovered, and classified. As such, an ideal speech situation is not arbitrarily constructed, rather, it is inherent in language. As far as ideology is concerned, Habermas represents it as a "world picture" which entrenches or justifies domination or hegemony (Habermas : 1971) cited in (Thompson, 1981: 99). Thus, Habermas views ideology as a form of distorted communication that works on hiding and defending the interests of certain social groups (ibid: 135).

### **3.2 Mey (2001)**

Mey puts his theory of pragmatics through "critical" perspective in relation to power and the social struggle by integrating work from critical discourse analysis. Archer et. al. (2012: 133) elaborate that the first seed of critical pragmatics is implanted in Mey's (1979) article "*Toward a Critical Theory of Language*" in which he discusses the possibility of doing a critical pragmatic approach. Mey continues his effort to construct an approach of critical pragmatics and, this time, in his monograph "*Whose Language?*" (1985), in this work he tries to uncover the ways in which employers and employees "worded their world" cited in Thompson (1981). Within the same time, the emergence of critical discourse analysis is witnessed. This is, in turn, considered as a justification of why Mey's (2001) approach of critical pragmatics draws upon the work of critical discourse analysis researchers such as Teun van Dijk and Norman Fairclough.

Meanwhile, Fairclough rejects Mey's suggestion to classify critical discourse analysis with a sub-discipline in pragmatics. This



rejection comes as result to the fact that Mey's approach emphasizes textual analysis whereas Fairclough and his co-workers focus on ideological aspects that shape the text (Archer et. al., 2012: 133). The other reason is Fairclough's concern regarding the weakness of pragmatics in relations to issues of power and ideology (Fairclough, 2001: 7). Changing the direction from textual analysis towards “how texts fit into socio- political landscape in which they are produced” (Jeffries, 2010:11) is most evident in Fairclough's (2001: 299) when he pronounces that “social issues not texts and interactions' are the starting point for CDA investigations”. In spite of this given claim, Fairclough himself has formerly emphasized the importance of textual analysis as “texts and interaction” for pragmatics (Fairclough, 1989: 26).

Ultimately, Mey's (2001) *Pragmatics: An Introduction* lies in three parts. The most relevant part to the present study is part three “Macropragmatics” which encompasses the chapters from (7) to (11). In chapter (7) “Meta-pragmatics” Mey starts with how language users shape language in communication and finishes with relating these issues with “critical pragmatic” (Mey, 2001: 173-205). Then, the following chapters are dedicated to Mey's pragmatic theory of action that concentrates on the “doing” besides the “saying” of a communicative action, and finally Mey starts a critical approach in pragmatics, that is in chapter (11) which focuses on the relationship between pragmatics and power and other different forms of social struggle through utilizing the contributions of critical discourse analysis into his theory of pragmatic acts (ibid: 289-328).

### **3.3 Korta and Perry (2011)**

As explained earlier that critical pragmatics in Korta and Perry (2011) conception is different from critical pragmatics of Habermas and Mey whose aims are to study the relations between language on one side and power and ideology on the other side through pragmatic tools. In all three approaches the term is one (critical pragmatics) but the aims and the defining limits are never the same. This is because Korta and Perry's approach is rooted in the field of philosophy of language while critical pragmatics of Habermas and Mey is originated from critical theory of language and accordingly from critical linguistics.

However, Pagin (2014: 1) declares that Korta and Perry (2011) present a new contribution to the area at the semantics-pragmatics

interface. The main idea of the approach is that language users need the reflexive semantic content in addition to referential one in order to account for linguistic meaning in communication. Reflexive content is derived from what Korta and Perry calls truth conditions of the sentence.

Their book *Critical Pragmatics: An Inquiry into Reference and Communication*, Korta and Perry present three main ideas: “language as action” “communicative intentions” and “reflexive versus referential truth-conditions” (Korta and Perry, 2011: 3-7). Erol (2012: 227) explains each of these ideas as follows:

“The first idea, in which they follow Austin, involves two main points: we accomplish certain things with our utterances and these actions are never made in isolation—they are always embedded in a larger context in which the act takes on different meanings as the context changes. The second topic’s inspiration comes from Grice... The authors suggest that basics of communicative understanding should be based on discovering the speaker’s intentions and such study should be situated within pragmatics, instead of semantics. They recognize the contestation between coding/decoding versus intention discovery, that is, a structural approach versus interpretation of the intention reconstructed using contextual cues. While authors do not immediately “pick a side,” they reveal their positions as a combination of the two ideas... The third and last topic ... they later call “content properties.” This idea, the authors suggest, goes back to Hume and conveys the notion that conjunction of content forms the basis for observational knowledge”.

Thus, it becomes crystal clear that the orientation of the authors in their critical pragmatics is completely different from the critical pragmatics meant in the course of the present study. The aim of bringing their work under the section of critical pragmatics here is to make clear that it is not appropriate to classify their work as part of the critical studies or critical linguistics whose purpose is to uncover ideological issues or different forms of social struggles related to language. It is not

appropriate because of a number of reasons: the first reason, the meaning of criticality in critical linguistics and critical studies is not the same in Korta and Perry work. Second, critical studies in general and critical pragmatics in particular follow the tradition of critical discourse analysis which has no relation to Korta and Perry work. The third reason, there is no mentioning for the word (ideology) in the whole book, which sustains the first two reasons. Consequently, all the reasons coincide with what Erol (2014: 230) concludes: “Korta and Perry’s Critical Pragmatics is an important resource for those who interested in the philosophy of language and reference and its intersection with cognitive science. They offer insightful solutions to important problems within semantics and pragmatics”.

### **Conclusion**

The study has presented a survey about the origins of critical pragmatics within the field of pragmatics itself and in relation to critical discourse studies in general and critical discourse analysis in particular. It has been clear throughout the survey that critical pragmatics is a subfield of sociopragmatics that follows the fashion of critical discourse analysis. Regarding the origins, the field has been traced back in the work of Habermas (1984) on communicative actions in which a relationship between pragmatics and power is considered as a main issue. The first seeds of the field are in Mey (1979) and then the field is culminated in Mey’s (2011) pragmatics.

It is very important to realize that Korta and Perry’s (2011) though carries the name of the field is not considered as part of critical pragmatics. The orientation of the authors in their critical pragmatics is completely different from the critical pragmatics that meant in the course of the present study uncover ideological issues or different forms of social struggles related to language is not part of Korta and Perry’s work. Their main and new contribution is in the area at the semantics-pragmatics interface.

### **References**

- Archer, D., Aijmer K., & Wichmann, A. (2012). Pragmatics: An Advance Resource Book for Students. Oxon: Routledge.
- Croom, A. (2015). Slurs and stereotypes for Italian Americans: A context-sensitive account of derogation and appropriation. Journal of Pragmatics 81. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0378216615000958> (Accessed on 20 July 2019).

## A Theoretical Survey on Critical Pragmatics..... (570)

- Cummings, L. (2010). (ed.), The Pragmatics Encyclopedia. Oxon: Routledge.
- Erol, A. E. (2012). Critical Pragmatics: An Inquiry into Reference and Communication. (Book Review). Journal of Language and Social Psychology 32(2). Retrieved from: <https://sci-hub.tw/https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0261927X12463822?journalCode=jlsa>. (Accessed on 20 July 2019).
- Fairclough, N. (2001). Language and Power. London: Longman. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.
- Jeffries, L. (2010). Critical Stylistics: The Power of English. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Habermas J. (1984). The Theory of Commutative Action. Trans, T. McCarthy, vol 1 and 2. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Huang Y. (2017). "Introduction: What is pragmatics?" In Yan Huang (ed.), The Oxford Handbook of Pragmatics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kincheloe J., L. & McLaren, P. (2000). "Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research". In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Korta, K. and Perry, J. (2011). Critical Pragmatics: An Inquiry into Reference and Communication. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mey J. L. (2017). "The sociological foundations of pragmatics". In Yan Huang (ed.), The Oxford Handbook of Pragmatics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mey, J. (2001). Pragmatics: An introduction. Malden: Blackwell.
- Oswald, S. (2014). "It is easy to miss something you are not looking for: A pragmatic account of covert communicative influence for (critical) discourse analysis". In C. Hart and P. Cap (eds.), Contemporary studies in critical discourse analysis. London: Bloomsbury.
- Pagin, P. (2014). Critical Pragmatics. The Philosophical Review 123 (3). Retrieved from: <https://read.dukeupress.edu/the-philosophical-review/article-abstract/123/3/371/98635/Critical-Pragmatics?redirectedFrom=fulltext>. (Accessed on 30 June 2019).
- Sinclair, T. (2005). Mad, Bad, or Sad?: Ideology, Distorted Communication and Child Abuse Prevention. Journal of Sociology, 41 (3). Retrieved from: <https://sci-hub.tw/10.1177/1440783305057074>. (Accessed on 11 July 2019).
- Talmy, S. (2010). "Achieving distinction through mock ESL: A critical pragmatics analysis of classroom talk in high school". In Gabriele Kasper, Hanh Thi Nguyen, Dina Rudolph Yoshimi, & Jim k. Yoshioka (eds.), Pragmatics & Language Learning. Vol. 12. Honolulu: University of Hawaii.
- Thompson, J. B. (1984). Studies in the Theory of Ideology. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Thompson, J.B. (1981). Critical Hermeneutics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Verschueren J. (1999). Understanding Pragmatics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.