

THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE IN PRAGMATICS

Maftuna Amriddinovna Bakhronova*m.a.baxronova@buxdu.uz**Teacher, English Linguistics Department of BukhSU.*

Abstract: *This article explores the historical perspective in pragmatics, focusing on the evolution of language use and pragmatic meaning across different historical periods. It argues that pragmatic meaning is shaped by social, cultural, and ideological contexts and therefore cannot be fully interpreted without diachronic analysis. Using a qualitative descriptive methodology, the study examines historical texts such as personal letters, legal documents, and literary works. Key pragmatic phenomena, including speech acts, politeness strategies, forms of address, deixis, and implicature, are analyzed within the theoretical frameworks of pragmatics and historical linguistics. The findings reveal that pragmatic conventions undergo systematic change over time, reflecting shifts in social structure and communicative norms. The article highlights the significance of historical pragmatics for the accurate interpretation of past discourse and its contribution to contemporary pragmatic theory.*

Keywords: *historical pragmatics; diachronic analysis; pragmatic meaning; speech acts; politeness strategies*

Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqola pragmatikaning tarixiy nuqtai nazarini o'rganadi va til ishlatilishi hamda pragmatik ma'nolarning turli tarixiy davrlarda qanday o'zgarishini tahlil qiladi. Tadqiqot shuni ko'rsatadiki, pragmatik ma'no ijtimoiy, madaniy va g'oyaviy kontekstlar ta'sirida shakllanadi va uni faqat diaxronik tahlil orqali to'liq tushunish mumkin. Tadqiqotda sifatli tavsifiy metodologiya qo'llanib, shaxsiy maktublar, huquqiy hujjatlar va badiiy asarlar kabi tarixiy matnlar tahlil qilindi. Muhim pragmatik hodisalar — nutq aktlari, odob-axloq strategiyalari, murojaat shakllari, deiksis va implikatura — pragmatika va tarixiy tilshunoslik nazariy asoslari doirasida ko'rib chiqildi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, pragmatik konvensiyalar vaqt o'tishi bilan tizimli o'zgarishlarga uchraydi va ijtimoiy tuzilma hamda muloqot normalaridagi o'zgarishlarni aks ettiradi. Maqola tarixiy pragmatikaning o'tgan davr matnlarini to'g'ri talqin qilishdagi ahamiyati va zamonaviy pragmatika nazariyasiga qo'shgan hissasini yoritadi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *tarixiy pragmatika; diaxronik tahlil; pragmatik ma'no; nutq aktlari; odob-axloq strategiyalari*

Аннотация: *В данной статье рассматривается историческая перспектива в прагматике, с акцентом на эволюцию использования языка и прагматического значения в различные исторические периоды. Подчеркивается, что прагматическое значение формируется под влиянием*

социальных, культурных и идеологических контекстов и поэтому не может быть полностью понято без диахронического анализа. В исследовании применена качественная описательная методология, анализируются исторические тексты, такие как личные письма, юридические документы и литературные произведения. Основные прагматические явления — речевые акты, стратегии вежливости, формы обращения, деиксис и импликатура — рассматриваются в рамках теоретических подходов прагматики и исторической лингвистики. Результаты показывают, что прагматические конвенции систематически изменяются с течением времени, отражая изменения социальной структуры и коммуникативных норм. Статья подчеркивает важность исторической прагматики для правильной интерпретации прошлых дискурсов и её вклад в современную прагматическую теорию.

Ключевые слова: историческая прагматика; диахронический анализ; прагматическое значение; речевые акты; стратегии вежливости

Pragmatics is concerned with the study of language use in context and the ways in which speakers convey meaning beyond the literal interpretation of linguistic forms . Traditionally, pragmatic research has focused on synchronic analysis, examining contemporary language use. However, such an approach is limited in explaining how pragmatic norms and communicative practices develop and change over time.

The historical perspective in pragmatics, commonly referred to as historical pragmatics, emerged in response to this limitation. According to Jucker and Taavitsainen , historical pragmatics investigates language use in earlier periods by combining pragmatic theory with diachronic linguistic analysis . This approach emphasizes that pragmatic meaning is not static but historically situated and shaped by social conventions, cultural values, and power relations specific to particular historical contexts.

The present study employs a qualitative and descriptive research methodology. The data consist of written historical texts representing different genres, including private correspondence, legal documents, and literary works. Such texts are widely recognized as valuable sources for reconstructing past communicative practices .

The analysis is based on theoretical frameworks from pragmatics and historical linguistics. Pragmatic phenomena such as speech acts, politeness strategies, forms of address, deixis, and conversational implicatures are identified and examined within their historical settings . A comparative diachronic approach is applied in order to trace patterns of pragmatic change and continuity across different periods.

The analysis demonstrates that pragmatic conventions are closely connected to historical context. One significant finding concerns changes in politeness strategies and forms of address, which reflect shifts in social hierarchy and interpersonal relations. Earlier texts tend to exhibit more elaborate and formal politeness markers, while later texts show a gradual move toward simplification and increased directness. In contrast, later texts reveal a gradual shift toward simplification and increased directness in pragmatic expression. This change corresponds to broader social transformations, including the weakening of rigid class structures, the rise of individualism, and the democratization of social relations. Forms of address become less hierarchical, and politeness strategies increasingly rely on efficiency and clarity rather than elaborate indirectness. Such developments indicate that pragmatic norms evolve in response to changing social realities rather than purely linguistic mechanisms. Furthermore, the study reveals that certain speech acts undergo noticeable changes in their pragmatic force and conventional realization over time. Requests, directives, and expressions of obligation, for instance, tend to become less indirect and less mitigated in later historical stages. While earlier discourse often favored indirect strategies to preserve face and social harmony, later communicative practices reflect greater tolerance for explicitness and reduced face-threatening potential. This evolution aligns with changing communicative expectations and social norms governing interpersonal interaction. These findings strongly support the view that pragmatic meaning cannot be fully understood without reference to the historical conditions in which interaction takes place. As emphasized by Stephen C. Levinson (1983), pragmatic interpretation is inherently context-dependent, and historical context constitutes a crucial dimension of that dependency. Ignoring the historical embeddedness of pragmatic phenomena risks producing anachronistic interpretations of past discourse. Therefore, a historical perspective is essential for accurately reconstructing communicative intentions and interactional norms in earlier periods.

These findings support the view that pragmatic meaning cannot be fully understood without reference to the historical conditions in which interaction takes place.

The results confirm the importance of adopting a historical perspective in pragmatic analysis. Without considering historical context, there is a risk of interpreting past discourse through the lens of present-day pragmatic norms, leading to anachronistic conclusions. Historical pragmatics provides tools for reconstructing the communicative conventions of earlier speech communities and for interpreting historical texts more accurately.

Moreover, pragmatic change is shown to be influenced not only by linguistic factors but also by broader social and ideological developments. Language use is

inherently embedded in social practice, and changes in society inevitably affect communicative behavior. Thus, historical pragmatics strengthens the interdisciplinary link between linguistics, history, and cultural studies.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the historical perspective in pragmatics offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing language use across time. It demonstrates that pragmatic meaning is dynamic, context-dependent, and historically situated. By integrating pragmatic theory with diachronic analysis, historical pragmatics enhances our understanding of past discourse and contributes to the development of contemporary pragmatic theory.

REFERENCES:

1. Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Jucker, A. H., & Taavitsainen, I. (2010). *Historical Pragmatics*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
3. Mey, J. L. (2001). *Pragmatics: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
4. Culpeper, J. (2009). Historical sociopragmatics. *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, 10(2), 181–206.