

Bilingual Pragmatics

Presenter: Istvan Kecskes, Professor, State University of New York, Albany

Discussant: Michael Haugh, Griffith University

Motto of Panel, Presentation and Discussion

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfills himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world”.

(Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*: Book 11. The Passing of Arthur.)

Changes in ways how people use language in the globalized world require the revision of existing approaches to pragmatics. New approaches may be necessary to address the problems of language behavior of bi- and multilingual people, intercultural communication and use of lingua franca.

Definition of bilingual pragmatics

Bilingual (Dual language) pragmatics is a cognitive perspective on the language use of speakers and hearers with more than one language in social encounters. BP investigates and describes the changes and functioning of pragmatic competence in the emerging dual language system and the effect of common underlying conceptual base (CUCB) on language production and comprehension by analyzing discourse and conversation in which bilingual interlocutors participate. The BP approach argues that the “otherness” of bilingual speakers’ language use derives not from the linguistically-based means of their information processing systems but from the conceptually-based content of those systems.

Objectives of colloquium

The presentation aims to

- explain why bilingual pragmatics has to be distinguished from monolingual pragmatics,
- present the Dual Language System (DLS) as a production model,

- discuss meaning construction and comprehension in the DLS.

Issues for Discussion

The presentation will address several issues including:

- 1) Common ground, mutual knowledge, cooperation and relevance
- 2) Salience
- 3) Context
- 4) Meaning and intention