

## **Value in Pragmatics: Goals, Ranking, and Internet Adaptability**

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Recently, there have been tendencies to expand the accepted view of pragmatics as ‘the science of (the) language use(r)’. Thus, the notions of the ‘pragmatic act’ and the ‘pragmeme’, first introduced more than twenty years ago (Mey 1993; see Mey 2001 for an updated version) have attracted a good deal of attention, and are being put to practice in a number of contexts (see, e.g., the contributions in Capone & Mey 2016; Allan, Capone & Kecskes 2016). In particular, the notion of the *situation*, which was the original ‘matrix’ of the pragmatic act, needed to be made more specific and ‘grounded’. Mey (2013) represented an effort to further substantiate the ‘ground’ as a set of parameters dealing with space while including the sequential development of pragmatic acts over (see further Mey 2016a; Mey 2016b). In addition, Hodges, in a recent seminal article (2009), argued for introducing the concept of ‘value’ into pragmatic thinking and acting: even though value is inherent in all we do as humans, it has not been thematized consistently in pragmatic thinking.

My talk therefore represents an effort to plug also this hole in the theory and practice of pragmatics. Pragmatic value is of relevance both to scientific discourse and to our daily practices, as manifested in the way we assume and attribute responsibility to our own and others’ utterances and texts, both under normal conditions and in special situations such as fieldworking or life-threatening situations. It is particularly important to have the value factor placed correctly in relation not only to the context of controversy vs. agreement as they occur in academia, but also on a larger, societal scale, where so much depends on the value of our findings, when these are used in public debates on life-relevant issues of ecology, nutrition, medicine, law, engineering, and so on.

A ‘value neutral’ approach to research and practice involving humans and their needs will never function appropriately in a pragmatically responsible context. One such context is the internet, where values not just figure numerically, as countable ‘hits’ or calculated ‘trending’; more important are the ways we adapt ourselves and our messages to our audience, choosing ‘pragmatic adaptability’ to realize and transmit our values.

References

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