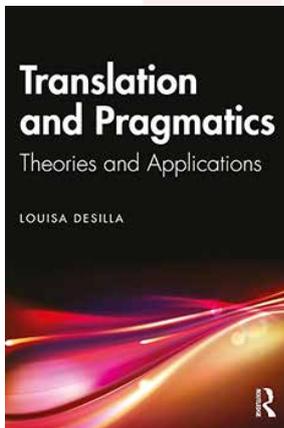


Translation and pragmatics in dialogue: From theory to practice

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Louisa Desilla

Translation and Pragmatics: Theories and Applications

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Louisa Desilla's book is an in-depth, practice-oriented study of four key pragmatic concepts: deixis, speech acts, implicature, and (im)politeness. Designed for translation and intercultural communication students, the book successfully bridges the gap between theory and practice by drawing on rich multimodal examples and original data.

The book is divided into two sections. Part I, 'The journey from abstract meaning to contextual meaning and force,' discusses deixis and speech acts in Chapters 1 and 2, respectively. Part II, 'Navigating interpersonal meaning and communicative styles,' explores implicature and (im)politeness in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively. Each chapter begins with an engaging warm-up exercise to encourage active learning. This is followed by an explanation of key concepts and theories, illustrated with examples from genres such as film, social networking sites, advertising, and memes. Each chapter features a case study examining the pragmatic phenomenon in translation, demonstrating the practical application of relevant theories and models. Furthermore, each chapter includes mini-exercises and research activities to engage readers and provide a hands-on experience with the material. It ends with helpful suggestions for further reading on pragmatic topics and their relation to translation.

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In Chapter 1, 'Deixis: Anchoring meaning to real and imaginary worlds,' the author introduces key concepts related to deixis and deciphers the role of context in interpreting meaning. Desilla explains the notion of proposition and the pragmatic processes of disambiguation and reference assignment. She then moves on to aspects of utterance meaning. She examines the main categories of deixis, namely person, place, time, social and discourse deixis, anaphora, and cataphora, using headlines as illustrative examples. She demonstrates that cross-linguistic variation in the encoding of deixis (e.g., the T/V distinction) poses exceptional challenges for translation and intercultural communication. The chapter concludes with a case study on the importance of deixis in audio description (AD) for visually impaired audiences. Desilla analyzes excerpts from the audio introduction developed by Liakou (2021) as part of her reception study of the Greek film *The Tango of Christmas* (2011) and discusses data from an interview with Liakou, who offers insights into how professional audio describers view the role of deixis in AD and the challenges they may face.

Chapter 2, 'Speech acts: Pinning down communicative intentions,' explores how speakers convey meaning through speech acts. It discusses the two key components of speaker meaning: contextual (utterance) meaning and force. The chapter presents Austin's (1962) speech act theory, focusing on locution, illocution, or illocutionary force, and perlocution. It also introduces Searle's (1979) taxonomy of speech acts, which includes assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. The author addresses the concept of indirect speech acts, using bilingual signage from Greece as an example. She also considers the challenge of translating speech acts, particularly the tendency in film subtitling to shift from indirect to direct speech acts due to time and space constraints. This is illustrated by the example of Ahri, a character in the video game *League of Legends*, which has been translated into 20 languages. A case study on advertising translation demonstrates the benefits of applying pragmatics and speech act theory to translation research and practice. By analyzing the Magnum ice cream ad (Magnum 2018), the author shows how speech acts can inform international market campaigns involving standardization, where the same core message is adapted slightly for global audiences, and localization, which involves tailoring the message to specific cultural contexts and transcreation.

In Chapter 3, 'Implicature: Reading between the lines,' Desilla explores the key concepts in the study of conversational implicature. She begins by discussing indirect meaning and its two main features: conscious intentionality and high risk. Drawing on Grice's (1975) approach to implicature, she explains the difference between natural and non-natural meaning, and between what is said and what is implied. She also defines the Cooperative Principle and the four maxims of conversation, namely Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner, which can be flouted or exploited to create meaning beyond what is explicitly stated. The author then discusses the difference

between conventional and conversational implicatures, focusing on generalized and particularized conversational implicatures. Examples from *Finding Nemo* (2003) and its subtitled and dubbed versions show how implicatures can be flouted to produce metaphors. After a brief reflection on Grice's theory, the author introduces Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986) as a more cognitive alternative approach to human communication. Key concepts include positive cognitive effects, the Cognitive Principle of Relevance, ostensive inferential communication, the Communicative Principle of Relevance, the presumption of optimal relevance, the relevance-theoretic comprehension process, the distinction between explicatures and implicatures, and the division of implicatures into implicated premises and implicated conclusions, as well as strong and weak implicatures and interpretive resemblance. These are illustrated with memes. After critically discussing Relevance Theory, Desilla references her own research (2012, 2014) into implicature in Greek subtitled versions of *Bridget Jones' Diary* (2001) and *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* (2004) to distinguish between implicature preservation, where translators retain the original's indirectness, and implicature explicitation, where subtitlers make implicit meanings explicit. She also discusses the challenges posed by culture-specific elements in translation.

In Chapter 4, '(Im)politeness: A weapon wielded for better or worse,' Desilla delves into the intricacies of politeness and impoliteness in translation. She introduces key concepts from Brown and Levinson's (1978/1987) politeness theory, including positive and negative face, face-threatening acts, positive and negative politeness strategies, and off-record strategies. The discussion also covers notions such as self-politeness and mock politeness (sarcasm), with examples drawn from email discourse and public signage. The focus then shifts to impoliteness, building on Culpeper's (2011) theory of positive and negative impoliteness strategies. Examples are drawn from Twitter/X and flaming or trolling. A case study from the film *Ocean's Eleven* (2001) demonstrates these concepts in practice and synthesizes earlier insights into implicature. Desilla analyzes a scene featuring covertly aggressive discourse and presents findings from a reception study that she conducted. In this study, participants first watched the scene without subtitles, then watched it again with official subtitles and author-created subtitles, and then shared their interpretations. The book concludes with an index (pp. 102-104).

Translation and Pragmatics: Theories and Applications offers an accessible introduction to complex pragmatic concepts while maintaining a strong focus on their practical applications in translation and the challenges that arise. Each chapter provides instructors with a solid foundation, making the book suitable as a core textbook for further development. However, the book goes beyond the scope of a conventional textbook. It provides detailed analyses of original data and makes empirical contributions to the field of pragmatics in translation. Chapters 3 and 4, which reflect

the author's extensive research on implicature and (im)politeness, are particularly notable. While the book sheds light on the challenges posed by language- and culture-specific variation in translation, it focuses predominantly on major European languages and Western contexts. Overall, this book is an insightful and pedagogically sound contribution to the intersection of pragmatics and translation studies.

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