Universal Pragmatics as a Methodology for Analyzing Institutional Cultures

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Abstract

Habermas maintains that the democratic nature of the public sphere can only be maintained within the context of the ideal speech situation. Truth, in this framework, means democratically arrived at consensus, free from domination. If consensus breaks down, that is if validity claims cannot be vindicated because they have been critically challenged, then truth claims may only be recovered through conditions of discourse in argumentative reasoning.

This involves the cooperative search for truth. If not allowed to progress because all participants have not been allowed to raise or challenge truth claims involving the four speech acts, then what results is a situation involving conflict and ideology. Conflict arises when "consensus concerning distribution of opportunities for satisfying needs breaks down" (Held 346).

What is necessary then is a critique of ideology through the "considerations of universal pragmatics" in order to determine the degree to which communicative action has given way to strategic action and particular interests of a dominant group as opposed to the generalizable interests of the entire community (Habermas 1979, 112-113).

It is therefore important to analyze the normative structure of particular socio-cultural systems and institutions in order to determine whether all participants have equal opportunities to employ all speech acts including communicatives, representatives, regulatives, and constatives. In the event that all actors are not able to employ and therefore fulfill their obligations which are necessary for establishing the ideal speech situation, then it is possible that what exists is a culture whose norms are entirely disconnected from justification.

This paper suggests that Universal Pragmatics as constructed by Habermas can be used as a practical methodology for analyzing various institutional cultures.

Keywords: Habermas, Universal Pragmatics, Ideal Speech Situation, Public Sphere, Culture, Democracy
Habermas's intent is to "identify and reconstruct the conditions of possible understanding" (1979, 1) in order to provide for a normative basis to critical theory which hinges on communicative interaction. Habermas' critique of both positivism and of Marx's approach to historical materialism has anticipated a theoretical and methodological perspective that is concerned with communicative competence in order to provide for a social structure free from distorted communication and domination.

The Habermasian perspective regarding communicative competence has rested upon what has been called the "linguistic turn." It refers to the acknowledgement of an "anthropologically deep seated" human potential and interest that fosters the development of human social structure within the context of language and reason. This chapter focuses on the articulation of Habermas's methodological approach to social research that has developed on the basis of what he has called "Universal Pragmatics," or the rational reconstruction of discourse.

Universal pragmatics encompasses the development of a cognitive ethics wherein moral validity claims are as capable of being grounded or supported as statements about empirical observations. It is within the structure of speech and communication that Habermas believes he has located the roots of critical theory and thus by extension the basis "of the good and true life" through self-reflection and undistorted communication.

The human interest in autonomy and responsibility is not mere fancy, for it can be apprehended a priori. What raises us out of nature is the only thing whose nature we can know: language. Through its structure, autonomy and responsibility are posited for us ...

In an emancipated society, whose members' autonomy and responsibility have been realized, communication will develop into the non-authoritarian and universally practiced dialogue from which both our model of reciprocally constituted ego identity and our idea of true consensus are always implicitly derived. To this extent the truth of statements is based on anticipating the realization of the good life (1971, 314)

With this "linguistic turn" Habermas seeks to recast the foundations of historical materialism and critical theory in order to determine a more comprehensive perspective concerning all forms of domination. This encompasses both instrumental rationality necessary for critique based upon understanding relationships of production, and communicative rationality, which enhances possibilities for consensus building and thus the possibility for realization of a democratic society.
Instrumental rationality ... carries with it connotations of successful self-maintenance made possible by informed disposition over, and intelligent adaptation to, conditions of a contingent environment. On the other hand ... communicative rationality carries with it connotations based ultimately on the central experience of the unconstrained, unifying, consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech, in which different participants overcome their merely subjective views and, owing to the mutuality of rationally motivated conviction, assure themselves of both the unity of the objective world and the intersubjectivity of their lifeworld (1984, 10).

This position impacts a number of areas including methodology, epistemology and legitimation of the social structure itself. It is directed toward action that is aimed at reaching understanding through language that is identified as the specific medium of understanding at the social-cultural stage of human evolution.

The contention is that communicatively competent interaction through the "speech act" utilizes language, which has an inherently rational component. Actors and interactions which do not fit the profile regarding communicative competence are more likely to be subject to distorted forms of communication and less likely to be committed to reaching understanding. It is through understanding and the desire to work toward consensus that a democratic community is established and the good and true life possible.

However, the establishment of a democratic community depends upon the legitimacy of the interaction and thus the structure in which that interaction takes place (1975, 72). Legitimacy is tied to "rightness" which is a Habermasian term related to validity claims concerning interpersonal relations established in the speech act. Habermas has written extensively about the relationship between legitimacy and the state (Habermas 1992, 440). This paper further discusses this connection, in relation to the social structure in chapter four.

Held says that Habermas is distinguishing between cognitive and non-cognitive ethics. Cognitive ethics refers to "intersubjectively recognized norms" produced by consensus and "based on the primacy of rational criticism" (Held 1980, 330). Non-cognitive ethics, on the other hand, are legitimated on the basis of legal belief systems rather than interpersonal relations and offer no distinction between concrete commands and intersubjectively agreed upon norms (Habermas 1975, 104).

Thus a cognitive ethics is dependent upon communicative rationality that finds its legitimacy in the inherent nature of what Habermas calls the "speech act." The speech act is
the core of the theory of communicative competence or what has come to be known as universal pragmatics.

The Speech Act

Universal pragmatics acknowledges the speech act as the basis for universal validity claims in order to ascertain common social interests through rational discourse, which by nature is devoid of deception. This necessitates a critique of language which anticipates a critique of consciousness; a Marxian concept.

From this perspective the roots of critical theory for a democratic society are further understood and contextualized not only within the boundaries of economics or politics or ideology, but within the structure of language and communication.

The speech act provides a tangible unit of culture that can be examined objectively to determine the conditions rendering its use meaningful. Speech acts themselves vary from the relatively simple to the more complex. A single sentence or phrase may be regarded as a speech act for certain purposes, while in other cases it may be more appropriate to examine an entire conversation, book, or episode. The issue is not so much the level of complexity or specificity at which speech acts are examined, but the fact that speech acts themselves are taken as the unit of cultural analysis (Wuthnow 199).

Speech acts can be analyzed on the basis of validity claims in order to determine whether discourse is being carried out according to the rules of communicative action and rationality or according to the goal directedness of instrumental rationality (Habermas, 1979, 119). Communicatively competent speakers are concerned with four universal validity claims essential to communicative action in order to provide for the possibility of consensus and understanding. The four following claims are identified for anyone intending to be involved in "the process of reaching an understanding" (1979, 2).

a. Uttering something understandable;
b. Giving {the hearer} something to understand;
c. Making himself thereby understandable; and
d. Coming to an understanding with another person.

The four are typically condensed for discussion to include the terms comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness or sincerity, and rightness or legitimacy, as the corresponding validity
claims. The contention is that communicative action can continue only if participants suppose that the claims, which are raised, are justified.

Forester identifies the validity claims as "the four norms of universal pragmatics" and "four norms of ordinary communication." He says it is helpful to pose them as practical questions in applying them to research.

1. Is the communication comprehensible, so others can understand what in fact is happening around them or to them?
2. Is the communication true? Can we believe it, bet on it? Is there evidence supporting it? What do other accounts of the situations say? Are the listeners being offered information upon which they can act, or are they being misinformed, however unintentionally?
3. Is the communication offered sincerely and uttered in good faith, or are the listeners being manipulated, misled, fooled or misguided?
4. Is the communication legitimate, given the role and the participation of interested parties, or is the communicator taking advantage of professional status unfairly (Forester 210)?

Habermas contends that consensus about the validity claims exists in any interactive communicative situation. If the validity claims cannot be vindicated or upheld then undistorted communication cannot continue (1979, 4).

In addition to the four validity claims inherent in communicative action Habermas describes four "domains of reality" including language, the internal world, the external world, and society, which correspond to each claim. In communicative action which is rational in that it seeks consensus and understanding, all domains are apparent and addressed, and thus all validity claims raised, but all are not necessarily given priority nor are they "thematized." "Thematization" will be dealt with shortly. The domain of language itself corresponds to the validity claim of comprehensibility and acts as the medium of inter-relation between the other three domains, which include external nature, society and internal nature. External nature corresponds to the truth validity claim. It is the domain that is objectivated and is thus perceived to be manipulable. Consequently in the present social structure it often includes people and situations as objects.

Society corresponds to the validity claim of rightness or legitimacy. It deals with normative structures, symbolically prestructured by society involving conformative attitudes
that are not self-denigrating but rather work toward the establishment of consensus. A communicator acting communicatively according to such norms is not seeking to manipulate or to distort.

Internal nature corresponds to the validity claim of truthfulness or sincerity. It includes all wishes, feelings and intentions. It encompasses and expresses personal experiences and knows the self as subjectivity (Habermas 1979, 67-68).

This points to the fundamental importance of speech and the necessity for focusing upon it thoroughly as a basis for critical theory. Through its structure, speakers accomplish "demarcations" or boundaries wherein certain realities are established in everyday experiences.

The subject demarcates himself: (1) from an environment that he objectifies in the third-person attitude of an observer; (2) from an environment that he conforms to or deviates from in the ego-alter attitude of a participant; (3) from his own subjectivity that he expresses or conceals in a first-person attitude; and finally (4) from the medium of language itself (66).

Again, it is important to emphasize that all domains are acknowledged for communicatively competent actors wherein the interactive function of language is allowed to fulfill its reflective potential. This appears to be the major difference existing between communicative and instrumental rationality.

These "demarcations" can be thought of as four different dimensions in which communication in the form of interaction can be distorted or suffer a breakdown. A problem with comprehensibility develops when a misunderstanding takes place about one's utterance. Resorting to such tactics as paraphrasing and elucidation can alleviate such a breakdown.

Communicative action can suffer a setback if the truth about what one has said is not accepted. The validity claim of truth corresponding to the reality domain of external nature can be restored with reference to additional information or "citing recognized authorities."

In addition, the validity claim of truthfulness incorporating the internal domain can be jeopardized if one's intentions are questioned because of insincerity, deception, etc. It is possible that good faith can be restored "through assurances, consistency of action, or readiness to draw, accept and act on consequences" (McCarthy 289).
Finally disruption in consensual relationships can develop if validity claims regarding the normative component of rightness within the societal domain are questioned. This would involve a challenge to one's right to engage in argument or discourse on the basis of the perceived appropriateness of one's role or status.

Within this framework, it is important to remember that language is the tool that joins the structure of communicative action and rationality in order to have a hope for undistorted communication and thus freedom from domination and exploitation. However language as a "mechanism" can be replaced in "the competition ... between principles of societal integration."

Thus there is a competition ... between the mechanism of linguistic communication that is oriented toward validity claims ... and those de-linguistified steering media through which systems of success-oriented action are differentiated out (Habermas 1984, 342).

In the case of social integration that is driven by purposive-rationality, the important steering mechanisms become power and money. In this context the lifeworld, (the world of shared meanings and subjective understandings already mentioned in chapter two) comes to be formally organized by these destructive mechanisms.

Social action is no longer coordinated through value consensus but rather through such institutions as the legal order which forms the connection between the economic system (money) and the administrative system (power). This "rationalization of the lifeworld makes possible a kind of systemic integration that enters into competition with the integrating principle of reaching understanding and ... has a disintegrative effect on the lifeworld" (343).

The concept of the lifeworld along with that of communicative action provide a general framework for social theory. The lifeworld, represented by such elements as culture (external domain), society (societal domain) and personality (internal domain), is necessarily related to processes that allow for reproduction of the lifeworld itself (1989, 138). These reproductive processes including cultural reproduction, social integration and socialization correspond generally to the various speech act components including propositional, illocutionary and expressive which will be discussed below.

The above communicative action functions must be allowed to work toward symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld. If the process is interfered with, a number of structural crises
can result including withdrawal of legitimation, alienation, loss of meaning and withdrawal of motivation for members of a social system (142-143).

However the methodological analysis of such crises must involve not only a lifeworld perspective organized around communicative action but, a systems perspective dealing with the processes of material reproduction. This then is comparable to the reconstruction of historical materialism mentioned in the last chapter.

In capitalist society, purposive-rational action measures success by way of efficiency and economy of effort that generally are enhanced through specialization in the division of labor. This however leads to a devaluing of lifeworld contexts in which reaching an understanding through language and communicative action is no longer paramount because other steering media such as power and money become favored.

This has allowed for a system of rewards and punishments which has generated a structure of control rather than for an avenue through which consensus might be established by linguistic means. Rather than communicative competence, money and power have become the regulators of the social structure, particularly in relation to organizations that have developed along hierarchical lines.

To the extent that methodical-rational conduct of life gets uprooted, purposive-rational action orientations become self-sufficient; technically intelligent adaptation to the objectified milieu of large organizations is combined with a utilitarian calculation of the actor's own interests. The life conduct of specialists is dominated by cognitive-instrumental attitudes toward themselves and others (1989, 323).

Individuals in such organizations typically define themselves as professionals involved in an expert culture. Consequently by definition they distance themselves a great deal from the larger society. Such "professionalization" of individuals brings with it an impoverishment and further devaluation of the lifeworld.

Ironically, the effect is even more tragic in those areas of action that specialize in cultural transmission but have attempted to resist being penetrated by the steering mechanisms of power and money. Such areas have traditionally depended upon ideals of mutual understanding (330). The lifeworld in relation to the state and steering mechanisms is discussed further in chapter four.
Aspects of Universal Pragmatics

Universal pragmatics is concerned with "utterances" or what it defines as "the elementary units of speech." This concept distinguishes between sentences, which are governed by rules of grammar, and utterances, which are governed by pragmatic rules.

Whereas the production of grammatical sentences is only concerned with the validity claim, comprehensibility; the use of the sentence in the context of possible understanding as an utterance, must also satisfy the other three validity claims. Communicative competence thus must include comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness or trust, and perform in such a way that it is perceived as right according to recognized norms (1979, 29).

Assuming comprehensibility then, universal pragmatics incorporates three different aspects with regard to the speech act and in relation to the other three validity claims. The theory of elementary propositions is concerned with acts of reference and prediction in order to represent something in the world. This is measured against the validity claim of truth and is in relation to the external domain already discussed.

The theory of first person sentences or linguistic expressions is concerned with the intentions of the speaker and is measured against the validity claim of truthfulness or trust. It is related to the internal domain.

The theory of illocutionary acts is concerned with the establishment of interpersonal relations. It is related to the societal domain and is measured against the validity claim of rightness and thus is a normative component. Habermas says that for a theory of communicative action it is this third aspect that is particularly important (1979,34).

Another important element is the "double structure of speech" which focuses upon both the illocutionary and the propositional components of speech, which as already discussed, deal with truth and rightness, and the domains of the external world and society.

The illocutionary component involves the intersubjectivity between speaker and hearer that emphasizes the normative element. It is therefore relational and constructs the framework for the propositional element (content). The illocutionary element involves communication about the role in which communicated content is used and can be considered to be performative in nature or at least related to a performative attitude for the speaker.
A basic feature of language is connected with this double structure of speech, namely its inherent reflexivity ... In filling out the double structure of speech, participants in dialogue communicate on two levels simultaneously. They combine communication of content with communication about the role in which the communicated content is used (42).

The propositional content or information is communicated in the speech act but is yet separate from the illocutionary element. The distinction between illocutionary and propositional components has to do essentially with a distinction between meaning and force.

It points to further differences between sentences and utterances. Essentially meaning is applied to propositional elements and is applicable to either sentences or utterances. Force, however is something that is primarily related only to utterances. Performative expressions therefore involve the intentions with which propositional content is formed.

This is especially important as it relates to the intersubjective nature of communicative action; the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Understanding thus involves a continuum from two individuals who understand an expression the same way to two individuals who enjoy an agreement concerning the rightness of an utterance in relation to a mutually recognized normative background.

Thus the task of universal pragmatics is the rational reconstruction of the two primary structures of speech: illocutionary and propositional.

The illocutionary component consists in general of a personal pronoun in the first person, a performative verb, and a personal pronoun in the second person--for example, "I (hereby) promise you ....," "I (hereby) command you ....," "I (hereby) assert to you ...." the appropriateness of the expression hereby is an indicator of the fact that performative utterances establish the very relation that they linguistically present (McCarthy 282-283).

Habermas maintains that every utterance is embedded in interpersonal relations that are more important than semantic content. The principle task of speech act theory is to clarify the performance status of utterances, meaning that action is necessary and that every utterance must establish a relation between speaker and hearer. What becomes apparent then is the "generative power" of speech acts.

A speech act succeeds or fails based on the relation of the speaker and the hearer. First of all however, the speaker must have intended the relation and secondly the hearer can
understand and accept the content uttered by the speaker in the sense indicated such as a promise or suggestion. Thus interpersonal relations are fostered by successful speech acts, but also rely upon the understanding being established (1979, 35).

The execution of a speech act is a condition of possibility of experience, namely the communicative experience that the hearer has when he accepts the offer contained in the attempted speech action and enters into the requested connection with the speaker (48).

The meaning of illocutionary acts are learned only as participants in performative speech actions and this is developed only through the establishment of interpersonal relations. By contrast we learn the meaning of sentences only in the objectivating attitude of observers, through the representation of facts.

The establishing of an interpersonal relationship seems to be key to whether or not the meanings of linguistic expressions can be categorized as illocutionary or propositional. Categorization does not mean that certain speech acts are excluded in favor of others. Rather, thematization is involved wherein two levels of communication are entered at once (Austin 144-145).

**Thematization of Validity Claims**

Habermas says that either the interpersonal relation or the propositional content can be made centrally thematic in communication. Thematization refers to the practice in speaking of emphasizing certain validity claims over others even though it is necessary for all to exist if communicative competence is to be achieved.

Participants, in communicating with one another about something, simultaneously enter upon two levels of communication—the level of intersubjectivity on which they take up interpersonal relations and the level of propositional contents. However, in speaking we can make either the interpersonal relation or the propositional content more centrally thematic; correspondingly we make a more interactive or a more cognitive use of our language (1979, 53).

What follows from this assertion is an understanding of speech act patterns in relation to the thematization of an interactive use of language which corresponds to regulative speech acts, and thematization of a cognitive use of language, which corresponds to constative speech acts.

Regulative speech acts thematize relations between speaker and hearer while considering the propositional content of utterances in only peripheral ways. Regulative speech acts consequently raise rightness as a validity claim and are concerned with normative contexts of communication.
The normative contexts of communication include such regulative speech acts as commands, admonitions, prohibitions, refusals, promises, agreements, notices, excuses, recommendations and admissions. While they do indeed address and contain truth claims relating to propositional content (all communicative action must) they primarily stress the relation between the speaker and the hearer (54).

Regulative speech acts offer important clues to the normative contexts of a given culture. Speakers incorporate these clues into the content of their speech acts thereby indicating a great deal about the interpersonal relations, traditions and values of a particular societal domain.

While speakers as actors may not necessarily recognize this relationship as a set of pre-existing norms or patterns for interaction, it nevertheless is used to judge communication as legitimate or illegitimate. That is, a speaker is evaluated on the basis of a culture's normative standards and may or may not feel free to claim legitimacy. Habermas refers to this as a "speech-act immanent obligation."

In the interactive use of language, the speaker proffers a speech-act immanent obligation to provide justification. Of course regulative speech acts contain only the offer to indicate, if necessary, the normative context that gives the speaker the conviction that his utterance is right. Again, if this immediate justification does not dispel an ad hoc doubt, we can pass over to the level of discourse, in this case of practical discourse. In such a discourse, however the subject of the discursive examination is not the rightness claim directly connected with the speech act, but the validity claim of the underlying norm (64).

This social world through the regulative speech act establishes the distinction between what is and what ought to be. However in the case of distorted communication the opportunity for discursive examination is likely circumvented by structural imperatives.

Constative speech acts stem from the cognitive use of language and explicitly raise truth claims in relation to the external domain. Constative speech acts include such things as reports, explications, communication, elucidations, narrations, assertions, reports, predictions, and denials. While they do contain an implicit acknowledgement of normative validity claims their primary validity claim concerns propositional content. Thus they thematize the content of an utterance about an observation or experience in which the speaker "refers to something in the objective world, and in such a way that he would like to represent a state of affairs (1984, 325).
In the cognitive use of language, the speaker proffers a speech-act immanent obligation to provide grounds. Constative speech acts contain the offer to recur if necessary to the experiential source from which the speaker draws the certainty that his statement is true. If this immediate grounding does not dispel an ad hoc doubt, the persistently problematic truth claim can become the subject of theoretical discourse (Habermas 1979, 64).

This cognitive use of language permits only propositional assertions, which raise the truth claim and exhibit a correspondence between statements and facts. It is concerned with functions of speech, which allow analysis of the "conditions for making statements about the world" (White 54).

The expressive use of language, corresponding to the validity claim of truthfulness and thus to the internal world, relates to the speaker's wishes, feelings and intentions. Also known as avowal speech acts, they are self-disclosing in nature and self-representative. However, they are not typically thematized unless the speaker's truthfulness is not taken for granted.

The truthfulness with which a speaker utters his intentions can, however, be stressed at the level of communicative action in the same way as the truth of a proposition and the rightness (or appropriateness) of an interpersonal relation. Truthfulness guarantees the transparency of subjectivity representing itself in language (57).

Expressive speech acts allow the speaker to describe something that exists in his subjective world. He is thus able to refer to a situation and publicly disclose information of which only he has had privileged access. Through expressive speech acts, actors are able to demarcate boundaries between the external and the internal world.

This means that a speaker who engages in a constative speech act at the same time gives expression to a belief or conviction. With the correct performance of a regulative speech act, the speaker gives expression to a feeling of obligation.

In this way, the beliefs about facts can be distinguished from the facts themselves in the case of constative speech acts, and in the case of regulative speech acts "the feelings of someone who expresses regret or gratitude ... can be distinguished from the corresponding illocutionary acts (1989, 67).
Since the goal of communicative action is the establishing of understanding in order to circumvent distorted communication and thus the debilitating effects of alienation and exploitation, it is imperative that the relationship between the speaker and hearer becomes possible.

In the event that the speech act fails because the utterance is not acceptable, if consensus breaks down, or if validity claims cannot be vindicated because they have been critically challenged, then truth claims may only be recovered through conditions of discourse in argumentative reasoning. This involves the cooperative search for truth within the context of experiences relating to the external, internal and societal domains.

However, statements about experiences are still only statements in a discourse, which it must be remembered are bound to the structure of truth claims already discussed. Thus, analysis of discourse involves two levels and therefore two validity claims which can be justified discursively. These include the validity claims of truth (propositional statements) and correctness or rightness (appropriateness).

The two levels of discourse analysis include theoretical discourse and practical discourse which relate directly to the two primary validity claims respectively. Habermas maintains that it is especially important that participants be able to freely move back and forth between the two levels in order to insure that what he calls "the force of a better argument" predominates.

Only in the ability to freely to move to increasing levels of reflection can democratic discourse and undistorted communication be achieved. If this freedom is established as the normative basis for discourse and the opportunity for rational discussion is allowed to prevail, then the possibility exists for the establishment of the "ideal speech situation."

The Ideal Speech Situation

This perspective allows the implementation of a methodology for critical theory which allows the conditions of the ideal speech situation to be used as a discursive yardstick by which systematically distorted communication can be analyzed. Universal pragmatics maintains that "Truth" can only be arrived at democratically in discursive situations free from domination.
This necessitates a normative situation that fosters the opportunity for better arguments to have voices in establishing consensus. Such an interactive situation is essentially what Habermas means by the ideal speech situation. It involves the vindication of all validity claims through freedom to move between both theoretical discourse and practical discourse.

Thus the conditions necessary for the ideal speech situation can be described and incorporated into a critical theory of society through an analysis of discourse.

The condition for a grounded consensus is a situation in which there is a mutual understanding between participants, equal chances to select and employ speech acts, recognition of the legitimacy of each to participate in the dialogue as 'an autonomous and equal partner' and where the resulting consensus is due simply 'to the force of the better argument' (Held 343).

What is especially important in this situation then is the existence of equal opportunities for all participants to not only utilize speech acts but to engage in dialogue about their validity. The "ideal speech situation" assumes a rational consensus free from all forms of domination.

It involves a normative component necessary for establishing the building blocks to a better lifeworld and presupposes that the outcome of debate will not hinge on such steering mechanisms as power and money but rather on "the force of a better argument."

This ideal acknowledges the complexities of social and political conditions, yet assumes that the model of the ideal speech situation can be used to guide social and political decision making rather than finding and building the ideal social structure. This acknowledgement of the absolute importance of constraint-free-discourse goes to the very core of the theory and methodology of universal pragmatics.

A structure free from constraint assumes the automatic and equal opportunity for all participants to engage in the selection and employment of speech acts. This includes all speech acts in a "symmetrical distribution."

Participants must have the same chance to employ constative speech acts, that is to put forward or call into question, to ground or refute statements, (or) explanations, so that in the long run no assertion is exempt from critical examination ... to employ representative speech acts, to express their attitudes, feelings intentions, and so on that the participants can be truthful in their relations to themselves and can make their inner natures transparent to others ... to employ regulative speech acts, to command, to
oppose, to permit, to forbid, and so on, so that privileges in the sense of one sidedly
binding norms are excluded (McCarthy 306-307).

What is described here is the process of discursive will formation through which the
public sphere (which is discussed in chapter four) can be repoliticized in order for
legitimation to be achieved within a given culture. The contention is that only through the
parameters of the ideal speech situation, which incorporates practical discourse, can decisions
about issues, which are of importance to society, be made rationally and democratically with
any hope for consensus.

Discursive will formation through the ideal speech situation must include the four
speech acts: communicatives, representatives, regulatives and constatives. The four speech
acts are related to four respective validity claims: comprehensibility, truthfulness,
appropriateness and truth.

It must be remembered that if the validity claims, when raised, cannot be supported
there must be automatic acceptance of the possibility for discourse regarding the conflict.
Practical discourse is important since it serves generalizable rather than particular interests.
This is directly related to the notion of general symmetry regarding the opportunity for all to
select and employ speech acts. It represents a methodology for establishing the existence of
systematically distorted communication and consensus reached through constraint rather than
through the exercise of rational argument. A methodology utilizing universal pragmatics
thus considers the existence in discourse of all speech acts including communicatives,
representatives, regulatives and constatives.

Communicatives

Participants in the ideal speech situation must be equally able to engage is
communicative speech acts. That is they must be able to "initiate and perpetuate discourse" to
the extent that they are not restricted politically, economically or socially. Included in this
supposition is that they be able and at will to both raise questions and answer questions
within the discursive context.

Since the underlying validity claim is that participants are understandable, it is essential
that proper grammar and sentence structure are utilized. However this requirement is
frequently not a difficulty in cultural settings. Rather, barriers to employment of
communicative speech acts come from lack of opportunity to engage in discourse, inability to
question other participants, structural constraints, which do not allow access to all discursive situations and economic disadvantages which do not allow all participants equal opportunity.

Other constraints to the employment of communicative speech acts may include outright deception on the part of more knowledgeable participants, who are able to change the rules of a particular engagement and thus minimize the effectiveness of other arguments whether or not they are better. This would include such tactics as the insistence on additional criteria by which participants are judged "worthy" in order to take part in raising issues and asking questions.

Representatives

Representative speech acts are those that concern the opportunity participants have to express themselves sincerely in order that they might fully represent their opinions and attitudes regarding various issues in the lifeworld. It is essential in order for the potential of the ideal speech situation to develop that individuals feel free from both external and internal constraints upon their arguments.

"Representative" speech acts (such as to reveal, expose, admit, conceal, pretend, deceive, express), through which--in conjunction with intentional verbs (think, believe, hope, fear, love, hate, want, desire, and the like)--we mark the distinction between the "real" self and the expressions in which it appears, thematically stress the claim to truthfulness or veracity (McCarthy 286).

It is essential that speakers be able to claim truthfulness or sincerity or if challenged be able to make a case for themselves.

Internal constraints can work against this paradigm in situations where participants are part of institutional cultures for instance, which are committed to certain policies without regard for rational arguments from other parties.

External constraints can also circumvent the ability of speakers to fully represent their arguments. Such barriers to expression might come from political and economic interests. That is, private and specialized political and economic interests might be powerful enough to jeopardize more generalizable public interests.
External constraints of this nature have the potential to misguide, mislead and manipulate. This type of distortion includes insincerity on the part of powerful participants, which are often translated into expressions of false concern and the hiding of motives. There also can exist a major misrepresentation of the public good which can lead to a great deal of deceitful policy making in order to enhance a particular as opposed to the generalizable welfare.

Since representative speech acts have a relation to the speaker’s subjectivity, his or her presentation of the subjective self, depending upon internal and external constraints, may or may not be a truthful presentation and in fact may be self-deceiving.

Regulatives

Regulative speech acts represent the third requirement for communicative action and necessitate that all participants enjoy equity in the ability to forbid or permit arguments. They therefore indicate a normative condition and can include both a moral and a legal representation.

Normatively regulated speech acts embody moral-practical knowledge. They can be contested under the aspects of rightness. Like claims to truth, controversial claims to rightness can be made thematic and examined discursively...In moral-practical argumentation, participants can test both the rightness of a given action in relation to a given norm, and, at the next level, the rightness of the norm itself (Habermas 1984, 334).

Regulative speech acts thus encompass normatively regulated action and include such things as recommendations, commands, warnings, requests, excuses and advice. These represent the relationship between “the is” and “the ought” and allow the speaker to express his or her conviction that what is being said should be said.

If a challenge develops concerning the rightness of what is being said, the speaker (assuming communicative action is operational) should have the freedom to exercise the opportunity to present arguments as to why what he or she is saying is not contrary to existing norms.

However, this situation is also approachable on another level involving the validity of the underlying norm itself. Thus the speaker can actually challenge the underlying norm in an attempt to circumvent it for the purpose of lending credence to an argument.
Distorted communication exists when the opportunity, which speakers should have within communicative action, to make arguments that what they are saying has validity, is cut off. On occasion this speech act situation and accompanying validity claim will also be circumvented in the context of one participant withholding important information from another participant under the guise of such things as national, internal or institutional security and secrecy.

Frequently state and governmental agencies, and large corporate institutions are in particularly favorable positions of power to be able to take advantage of such communicative distortions thereby hindering communicative action and the fostering of consensus on the basis of interaction. In such instances, the reality of the situation is that not all pertinent information is available to all interested participants.

Thus the distortion can be accomplished from two directions including either an inability to argue for the validity to speak or the inability to argue that the opportunity for access to all information is valid. Such cases can involve examples where government legislation, acting as the normative standard, hinders the access to information and thus needs to be severely questioned.

In the one case, actions are judged according to whether they are in accord with or deviate from an existing normative context, that is, whether or not they are right with respect to a normative context recognized as legitimate. In the other case, norms are judged according to whether they can be justified, that is, whether they deserve to be recognized as legitimate (Habermas 1985, 89).

However if even the opportunity to question such norms is circumvented, then distorted communication continues unencumbered.

Constatives

Constative speech acts represent the fourth requisite in the ideal speech situation. This requirement provides for equal opportunity of all participants to engage in and critique interpretations, explanations, justifications and statements so that through open consideration and criticism free and open discourse can develop.

Constative speech acts, in thematizing the claim to truth, include such utterances as asserting, reporting, explaining, contesting, denying, predicting and narrating. They refer to
the speaker's experiences in distinguishing between the world of being and the world of illusion in order to represent a particular state of affairs.

This objective world is defined as the totality of states of affairs that either obtain or could arise or could be brought about by purposiveful intervention ... Through his beliefs and intentions the actor can take up basically two types of relation to the world ... In one direction the question arises whether the actor has succeeded in bringing his perceptions and beliefs into agreement with what is the case in the world; in the other direction the question is whether he succeeds in bringing what is the case in the world into agreement with his desires and intentions (Habermas 87).

Perhaps as important however, is that all actors are given equal opportunity to offer constative speech acts. Otherwise whether they are successful or not becomes irrelevant. Thus the ideal speech situation depends on access to opportunity at participation even more so than the success of individual actors as participants.

A number of things may work to circumvent the prerequisites of the ideal speech situation with regard to constative speech acts. For one, if participants are not allowed access to all information, then "what is the case in the world" cannot be brought into agreement through discourse. If one party is able to keep certain information off the agenda, they are essentially able to control the construction of knowledge about reality.

In such situations things like governmental or institutional policy may actually be exempt from discussion. In addition certain facts about the objective world may actually be kept from discourse because revelation would be damaging to the position of those attempting to control discourse.

Thus while constative speech acts typically are considered to be associated with the opportunity to present information about the objective world, the opportunity to disagree and debate another participant's perception of the objective world is just as important. If such omissions are allowed, it is likely that the truthful grounding of statements and arguments will result in distortion.

What results is a situation wherein one participant or group of participants is systematically kept from the opportunity to achieve understanding in discourse. That is, they are not allowed the opportunity to succeed based upon the "force of a better argument" either through observations about the world or through intentions to intervene.

In other words, merely the claim that a procedure, process or institution is functioning democratically and rationally is irrelevant if it cannot meet this test of critical theory involving the use of universal pragmatics on the basis of historical and speech act analysis (Kemp 1988, 197).
Summary and Future Work

Any number of institutional structures and policy-making procedures may be analyzed using universal pragmatics as a methodological framework. Regarding day-to-day interaction in these institutional settings something very important is at stake.

Public broadcasting, for example, both on the national and local level is an important channel for citizen participation, yet suffers from a variety of structural contradictions. Some of the most ironic contradictions however come from relationships inside local public broadcasting institutions wherein producers and managers find themselves in conflict because of structural constraints over policy making norms and ideals regarding programming.

The situation provides an interesting paradox for study since on the one hand public broadcasting's systemic goals concerning democracy and diversity appear to be undergoing almost constant bombardment from various steering media including money and power. And, on the other, local public broadcasting personnel find themselves in almost continuous conflict with one another because of these systemic contradictions. Thus they often engage in strategic and instrumental action in discourse with one another, rather than communicative action, in order to survive. Essentially particular interests rather than generalizable interests appear to permeate the entire system.

A follow-up paper to this one will provide analysis of the structural contradictions with which local public broadcasting managers and producers must deal. From the perspective of universal pragmatics, such structural and organizational contradictions appear to pressure public broadcasting personnel into a choice between using instrumental rationality and strategic action, which are means/end oriented, focus upon political and economic survival, and construct both programming and the audience as commodities as opposed to communicative action which includes a normative component, includes equal opportunity and employment of all speech acts and constructs programming as potentially empowering to the voiceless and the audience as a citizenry.

The determination of how meaning is constructed for public broadcasting managers and producers in relation to the external, internal and social world involves the social structural contradictions they encounter in day-to-day activity and relationships. Such activity and relationships directly affect the type of programming offered in this area of the public sphere and thus impacts the maintenance of democracy.

This concerns public broadcasting's structure as an element in the public sphere and focuses upon the daily interaction (speech acts) of a local public broadcasting network and its personnel as they live life and attempt to construct knowledge in it (Wellmer 84). Whether democracy and communicative action can flourish in such an atmosphere is questionable.
References


