PRAGMEMIC DIALOGICALITY AND ITS ROLE IN REVISITING DERRIDEAN ITERABILITY

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Abstract: This study traces the concept of binary oppositions in ancient Rome and its role in determining cultural identity in the Flavian age. The very concept of imperial vs. periphery was elemental in separating the emperor from his centre, Rome, and the remote periphery. It was for the first time in the Flavian age that the emperor was not directly connected with the main centre of civility and the entire empire, Rome. The concept of binary oppositions became pivotal in determining identities and in creating new ideologies that dominated the ancient world for centuries. This very concept further expanded its power in later millennia to become a fundamental guarantor of stability for logic, philosophy and ideology." Applied to the Roman empire, it is easy to see how the centre and periphery are not purely geographical, but fit into a series of binary oppositions underpinning Roman ideology."(Zissos, 2016, p:224) As such, Rome was one of the main metropolises that introduced the concept of binary oppositions, depending mainly on the intrinsic concept of linearity. Jacque Derrida, the postmodernist thinker, tried to debunk the very idea of linearity in his theory known as Deconstruction through enforcing his coined concept known as iterability. This study further explores the vulnerability of Derridean iterability, which is the main pillar of Derridean Deconstruction, if seen from a pragmemic prism. By revisiting past correspondences between John Searle and Jacques Derrida, regarding the very idea of deconstructing texts, one can pinpoint salient aspects in Searle's logic that were not fully crystallized at the time. By adopting a new approach to understanding speech acts today, especially from the prism of Jacob Mey's Pragmemic theory, one observes that the idea of iterability, repetition of context in particular, is a spurious one. According to Mey, speech acts do not exist outside their nurturing context (Mey, 2010); meaning that a speech act on its own is a helpless verb that carries out no action without being pertinent to a unique context of situation. Having considered this new understanding of speech acts, one could re-evaluate the concept of deconstruction in its entirety; hence deconstruction does not exist in the actual world of contextualised pragmemes. In Pragmatics, language, whether written or spoken, is seen as a form of behavioural action, depending vehemently on the uniqueness of contexts. Every context is unique in its existence, creating thus a chain of unique pragmemes in their respective contexts. The idea of iterability as such fails to represent this intrinsic element in human language, which is the uniqueness of the situated context. This study will answer the following question: Do speech acts exist as such as influential verbs in context or as distinctive entities called "Culturemes"?. The study also concludes with emphasizing the efficacy of the Roman concept of binary oppositions, which is preponderantly influential in human thought.

Keywords: pragmeme; Derridean deconstructivism; cultural schemata; cultureme

1. ROME AT THE PERIPHERY. *EARLY FOUNDATION OF BINARY OPPOSITIONS*

The identification of being "at home" with the city of Rome was, by the Flavian period, inadequate to the structure of the empire. It was no longer even notionally the case that Rome was distinguished from all other cities as the place where Romans were at home and not at war. Rather, Rome became the focus of a campaign as much as other military centers. Even something as fundamental for Tacitus as the narrative structure of annalistic historiography is threatened by centripetal civil wars, as annalistic history typically begins with the city and moves on to the year's campaigns. The civil wars of 68-69, which reversed the military direction from moving outwards from Rome to moving inwards toward Rome, threatened the annalistic structure of Roman historiography as much as Rome itself (Pomeroy 2003:364).

2. DERRIDEAN DE-CONSTRUCTIVIST PROJECT

A writing that is not structurally readable-iterable-beyond the death of the addressee would not be writing. Although this would seem to be obvious, I do not want it accepted as such, and I shall examine

the final objection that could be made to this proposition. Imagine a writing whose code would be so idiomatic as to be established and known, as secret cipher, by only two "subjects." Could we maintain that, following the death of the receiver, or even of both partners, the mark left by one of them is still writing? Yes, to the extent that, organized by a code, even an unknown and nonlinguistic one, it is constituted in its identity as mark by its iterability, in the absence of such and such a person, hence ultimately of every empirically determined "subject." This implies that there is no such thing as a code of iterability-which could be structurally secret. The possibility of repeating and thus of identifying the marks is implicit in every code, making it into a network that is communicable, transmittable, de-Cipherable, iterable for a third, and hence for every possible user in general. (Derrida, 1988)

2.1 Defining iterability in a Derridean sense. In Signature Event Context, Derrida sets the scene for a retaliatory response against the logical positivism of speech acts, as envisaged and classified by John Searle in his book speech acts, which based on John Austin's posthumous book How to Do Things with Words. The main critique set against speech act theory is that it gives a specific privilege to performative verbs over constative verbs, giving this particular category of verbs as such a special powerful status. Derrida as such finds in this kind of classification of specialized verbs as a pseudo-representation of verbs that can be themselves iterabil (repetitive signs-metaphysical positivism).

2.2 The role of iterability in deconstructing binary oppositions. Derrida uses his term 'iterability' in such a way as to debunk Searle's argument that speech acts perform verbs thanks to their special status. Modern studies in Pragmatics have shown that the very theory of speech act, as envisaged by Searle, has itself some erroneous aspects, especially the syntactic account given to this very important pragmatic theory. Derridean deconstructivist theory mainly aims at annihilating the very idea of centre, origin, or reference. It tries as such to debunk classical dichotomies so as to find new meaning for the ever-deferred signifiers. By creating a reversal move from the signifier to the signified, Derrida succeeded, theoretically at least, in creating a chasm in the logical foundations of any text, namely binary oppositions. My argument in this paper is that Derrida's critique against Searle might not work very well in the context of the new findings in pragmatic studies.

2.3 Event, signature, context" and Derrida's rivalry with Austin and Searle.

As far as the internal semiotic context is concerned, the force of the rupture is no less important: by virtue of its essential iterability, a written syntagma can always be detached from the chain in which it is inserted or given without causing it to lose all possibility of functioning, if not all possibility of "communicating," precisely. One can perhaps come to recognize other possibilities in it by inscribing it or grafting it onto other chains. No context can entirely enclose it. Nor any code, the code here being both the possibility and impossibility of writing, of its essential iterability (repetition/alterity). (Derrida, 1988).

Iterability thus represents the pillar around which the whole concept of Deconstruction revolves. Creating reversibility in binary oppositions can only be possible through accepting the idea of a repetitive sign and a repetitive context. Reversibility of binary oppositions thus paves the way for cancelling linearity in human thought. According to Wittgenstein (1997),

In most cases, meaning is use' serves as a vital corrective for the impulse to launch into vague metaphysical speculations premised on the misuse of words.

3. JACOB MEY'S PRAGMEMES AND THEIR ROLE IN MATERIALOZING SPEECH ACTS IN CONTEXT

According to Mey, the theory of pragmatic acts [. . . focuses] on the environment in which both speaker and hearer find their affordances, such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said in the situation, as well as on what is actually being said. The emphasis is not on conditions and rules for an individual (or an individual's) speech act, but on characterizing a general situational prototype, capable of being executed in the situation; such a generalized pragmatic act I will call a 'pragmeme'. The instantiated individual pragmatic acts, [. . .] 'practs', refer to a particular pragmeme in its realizations. (Mey, 2003) In this line of thinking, the emphasis is not so much on rules for correct use of language, or on felicity conditions for individual acts of speaking, but on general situational prototypes of acts that are capable of being executed in a particular situation or cluster of situations. Such a generalized pragmatic act is called a 'pragmeme', (Mey, 2010) Pragmemes then

are social entities used by interlocutors to achieve their communicative goals.

4. CULTURAL SCHEMATA

According to Sharifian, the concept of 'schema' has been very widely used in several disciplines and under different rubrics, and this has led to different understandings and definitions of the term. For cognitive linguists such as Langacker, schemas are abstract societal representations. (Sharifian, 2014:62)

Cultural schemata, according to Palmer (1996) and Sharifian (2014), are the genuine operators of language; human meanings are, therefore, cultural enactments, imposed by their respective cultures. According to Fairclough (2003), social agents are the main mobilisers of the masses through the conceptualisation of discourse. As such, culture is eventually regulated by discourse-makers and manipulators who impose their ideology. The cultural pragmatic schemata resemble an umbrella of superordinate clouds of social codes, which regulate human behaviour at an interactional level.

The other element of this current analytical framework consists of speech acts. Some linguists understand these to be powerful verbs, capable of inciting action when uttered in a particular situation. Al Mutairi, Al Sharoufi and Dashti state that The other element of this current analytical framework consists of speech acts. Some linguists understand these to be powerful verbs, capable of inciting action when uttered in a particular situation. This outlook, however, has been severely criticised by Mey (2010), who attributes the power invested in a speech act to the power of the context itself. Cultural schemata thereby impose their own power on the formation of discourse, as stipulated by social agents and in order to produce powerful pragmemes, "which represent contextualised speech acts" Al Mutairi *et al.*, 2019)

Cultural schemata thereby impose their own power on the formation of discourse, as stipulated by social agents and in order to produce powerful pragmemes, which represent contextualised speech acts: "A pragmeme is a sociocultural product, rather than a stern-fixed linguistic term (Al Sharoufi, 2013:97). The reproduction and the use of pragmemes, which constitute the third element of Sharifian's framework, also depend on the way interlocutors negotiate meaning in discourse (Sharifian, 2016)

> Speakers and listeners are actively involved in a negotiating process that leads to creating a cycle of

actively changing contexts in which speech acts win their legitimacy of being real doers of action in real-time situations. Particular cultural repertoires in human societies facilitate language with a wealth of contextual resources that can help anchor meaning by favouring particular speech acts to other ones. (Al Sharoufi, 2013)

The final element of the analytical framework is the pract. Being the product of higher cultural schemata, practs establish a social order for classifying and normalising societal relationships: 'discourse may be seen as providing the vehicle through which power/ knowledge circulates and discourse strategies as the means by which the relations of power/knowledge are created, maintained, resisted and transformed' (Motion and Leitch, 2007:265). A pract thus is the manifestation of a contextualised speech act, which does not exist out of its nurturing context.

4.1 Semantics: cart and horse. A pragmatic description cannot depend on a particular language's semantics, in particular not on that language's always idiosyncratic lexicalization—just as one cannot build a theory of speech acting on what is available in the form of so-called 'canonical' speech acts in a particular language. Therefore, by starting out from semantics, and then filling our semantic needs by looking for what is available in the language, we are putting the semantic cart before the pragmatic horse. By contrast, if you start with pragmatics, you are where the real action is: the users. Pragmatics always comesfirst, and pragmatics constrains semantics, not the other way round. (Mey, 2010)

4.2 Linearity and its indispensable role in validating pragmemes in context. *Pragmemes, practs, and allopracts as empirical manifestation of empirical events.* Another contribution of applying the pragmatic cultural schema is to help diversify public relations literature and hopefully reinforce the critical approach to the public approach – as opposed to the functionalistic approach, which still dominates the scene. A critical approach will instead demonstrate that cultural pragmatic schemata play a major role in producing appropriate and effective pragmemes; thereby leading to the most appropriate practs being uttered in various public relations contexts. The pragmemes used by the public relations officers in their interviews for this study were primarily socio-cultural, rather than discursive products for enforcing, legitimising and naturalising the interviewees' perceptions of the

job itself, their position and role in their department, and both the process and message that they sought to convey to the public, as dictated by the government. This profound use of pragmemes calls for consecrating Cultural Pragmatic Schema: Adherence to professional values Speech act/event: Assertive speech act Pragmeme: Show professional skills Pract: 'I talk with confidence and knowledge about the Minister, because I know, I see, and I judge/evaluate'. Language use is the main producer of pragma-cultural meanings in discourse. Such a radical pragmatic perspective is deeply entrenched in cultural schemata, the latter being the generators of genuine meaning in discourse. (Al Mutairi *et al.*, 2019) A pragmeme is a pure societal product which, if contextualised, achieves its expected goals. One would also stress the idea that pragmemes are localized and contextualised acts that are encapsulated in their cultural schema. This phenomenon necessitates, therefore, a new concept that encapsulates both the idea of a contextualised speech acts and that of uniqueness. Pragmemes or contextualised speech acts function, in fact, when all pertinent cultural repertoires are in action at the moment of producing utterances. As such, the emergence of cultureme as a linear concept contributing to the production of pertinent pragmemes becomes the ultimate manifestation of cultural pragmemes. A cultureme thus is a societal entity existing at the intersection of a specific cultural schema and a localized speech act. It is the physical manifestation of a high-level cultural schema directing the usage of a specific speech-acting performance into qualifying a specific pragmeme to execute a specific *pract* in its pertinent context.

4.3 The pseudo-foundation of iterability as a permanent generator of signifiers. In light of the pragmemic theory, it is impossible to accept the idea of iterability in producing efficacious pragmemes in context. If adopted, Derrida's iterability would never allow efficacious and pertinent Culturemes to play their communicative role in context, hence they are first and foremost unique and unrepetitive signs in human discourse.

The below example clearly shows that the cultural schemata applied in Arabic are drastically different from what an English counterpart might look like:

Example 1

Cultural Pragmatic Schema: (Arabic / Tasgheerul Nafs)= (Belittling oneself as a polite strategy)
Speech act/event: Agreeing for a compliment
Pragmeme1: REASSIGN THE COMPLIMENT TO THE COMPLIMENTER
Pract (Lawla da3mikum la ma wasalna lima nahnu feehi)= (Without your invaluable support, we would not have reached this position today)
Pragmeme2: REASSIGN THE COMPLIMENT TO GOD
Pract 2: Ma nahnu illa waseelatan yusakheruha Allah fal hamdu washkru lahu) = (We are only a means that the Almighty bestows upon his believers. Thank God)

Example 2

Cultural Pragmatic Schema: (English) Replying in a Polite Manner
Speech act/event: Agreeing for a compliment
Pragmeme1: REASSIGN THE COMPLIMENT TO THE COMPLIMENTER
Pract1 (I appreciate your good wishes)
Pragmeme2: RETURN THE COMPLIMENT
Pract 2: You're most welcome

In English, interlocutors do not mention God or any reference to any deity. This drastic pragmatic difference affects the production of *practs* respectively in the sense that communication takes a different direction when persuading, agreeing, complimenting, etc. Any speech act thus is regulated by the higher cultural schemata, which in turn affects the use of appropriate pragmemes that contribute to producing the most appropriate pract. Knowing and being aware of different cultural repertoires in both languages will help communicators avoid drawing one-to-one comparisons between Arabic and English; as such they will become more conscious users of both Arabic and English.

5. METHODOLOGY

The very concept of iterability, repetition, casts doubt on the efficacy of speech acts as envisaged by

John SearlE. May be one of the main vulnerable aspects of speech act theory is the special status given to speech acts as powerful verbs that can carry out action on their own. Jacob Mey in his paper 'Reference and the Pragmeme' succinctly explains that pragmemes are social entities that cannot exist without a pertinent context (Mey, 2010). In order to clarify this outlook further, I want to draw upon an important study conducted by Zahraa Adnan and Fadhil Al- Murib who have investigated the concept of Gossiping in The Scarlet Letter. They have analysed a number of instances in the novel where speech acts are clearly manifesting gossip as being produced by speech acts

> Depending on the analysis of the data of the study, the following conclusions are introduced: (1) Gossiping is an activity that is concerned with the affairs of a third party. (2) The speech acts of telling, stating, and criticizing are employed to trigger gossip. (3) Telling and stating, as pragmatic strategies, are connected with serving the function of conveying information. (Adnan & Al-Murib, 2019)

My argument in this paper is that those specific speech acts, explicated by Adnan and Al Murib contribute to producing gossip through the power of the context in which they operate, as such they have a further actional dimension, which I characterize as "Cultureme".

6. RESULTS

Zahraa Adnan Fadhil Al- Murib use a number of examples from the Scarlet Letter to show the emergence of specific speech acts that contribute to producing gossip. I will introduce some of those examples and will situate them in their communicative slots to determine the contextual impact in transferring them into Culturemes, and not sole speech acts.

Excerpts from the Scarlet Letter:

"Goodwives," said a hard-featured dame of fifty, "I'll tell ye a piece of my mind. It would be greatly for the public behoof, if we women, being of mature age and church-members in good repute, should have the handling of such malefactresses as this Hester Prynne." (Hawthorne, 1852, p. 46)

In their commentary on the above excerpt, Zahraa Adnan Fadhil Al- Murib state that

> The hard- featured dame, the gossiper, starts the gossip by using the speech act of telling to convey information. The gossipee is realized by existential presupposition which is triggered by the definite noun phrase, Hester Prynne. (Adnan & Al-Murib, 2019)

Gossip is achieved here due to recognizing the speech act of **telling** in its context, triggering as such a pragmeme, a situated speech act, that specifies the needed *pract*, the physical contextualised manifestation of the speech act used, and reaching as such the ultimate form of the **Cultureme** that represents the actual manifestation of the pragmeme in its actual context.

The following table shows this process:

Cultural Pragmatic Schema: Gossiping about ill-reputed people
Speech act/event: telling the misfortune of Hester Prynne
Pragmeme: Agreeing for the gossip
Pract : *I'll tell ye a piece of my mind* (the physical enunciation of the utterance)
Cultureme: Affirmative answer (I'll tell ye a piece of my mind) enunciated in that specific context where the congregation of Puritan believers are beholding the misfortune of Hester Prynne before their eyes. Hester is standing on the scaffold awaiting the verdict of the Puritanical court over her crime of begetting an unlawful child.

The above table shows that the emergence of the cultureme "I'll tell ye a piece of my mind" is not a mere utterance; on the contrary, the process of producing this cultureme relies upon a general cultural schema in the Puritanical society at the time that an ill-reputed person is prone to suffer from people's gossip, producing as such a speech acts of **telling** a gossip. This telling produces **a pragmeme of agreeing the gossip**, meaning there is a solidarity on the part of the listener to accept the gossip. This agreement encourages the gossiper to say "I'll tell ye a piece of my mind", which would not have been enunciated by the gossiper unless all the pertinent contextual repertoire is available. In this particular example, the repertoire is manifested in Hester's presence on the scaffold and being punished for her misdeed of begetting an illegitimate child. The act of telling the gossip in this contextual circumstance is called (**Gossip telling cultureme**). The concept of cultureme thus is a highly encapsulated one in

which all situational, paralinguistic features like pronunciation, gestures, and proximity, and contextual features are included. Although a pragmeme is a contextualised speech act, a cultureme is a pragmeme produced in accordance with the application of highly specific cultural schemata.

Excerpt 2:

"People say," said another, "that the Reverend Master Dimmesdale, her godly pastor, takes it very grievously to heart that such a scandal should have come upon his congregation." (Hawthorne, 1852:46)

Adnan & Al Munib state that

The gossipper is another dame who starts the gossip by utilizing the speech act of stating to achieve influence as the gossip includes talking about norm-relevant standards. The gossiper is master Dimmesdale. It is triggered by existential presupposition (a definite noun phrase). (Adnan & Al Munib, 2019).

The following table shows the cultureme produced in this situation:

Cultural Pragmatic Schema: Gossiping about ill-reputed people
Speech act/event: Stating the misfortune of Hester Prynne
Pragmeme: Agreeing the gossip
Pract : *People say that the Reverend Master Dimmesdale, her godly pastor, takes it very grievously to heart that such a scandal should have come upon his congregation.* (the physical enunciation of the utterance)
Cultureme: Stating the utterance that *Reverend Dimmesdale takes the situation grievously to his heart upon his congregation, and* enunciated in that specific context, creates the second cultureme.

This example shows that **the act of stating the misfortune of Hester Prynne** is agreed upon by the interactants, producing as such **the pragmeme of agreeing the gossip** and triggering the enunciation of the **pract**

People say that the Reverend Master Dimmesdale, her godly pastor, takes it very grievously to heart that such a scandal should have come upon his congregation.

Enunciating such a pract would not have been possible without considering all the pertinent contextual repertoires available, reaching as such to the ultimate **Cultureme**.

Excerpt 3

"She hath good skill at her needle, that's certain," remarked one of the female spectators; "but did ever a woman, before this brazen hussy, contrive such a way of showing it! Why, gossips, what is it but to laugh in the faces of our godly magistrates, and make a pride out of what they, worthy gentlemen, meant for a punishment?" (Hawthorne, 1852, p. 49)

Adnan & Al Munib state that

The gossiper is a female spectator. She presents the gossip by an implicit criticizing of the brazen hussy (the gossipee that is presented by employing the existential presupposition). This gossip serves to impart knowledge.

Cultural Pragmatic Schema: Gossiping about ill-reputed people
Speech act/event: Criticizing the misfortune of Hester Prynne
Pragmeme: Agreeing for the gossip
Pract : *She hath good skill at her needle, that's certain," remarked one of the female spectators; "but did ever a woman, before this brazen hussy, contrive such a way of showing it! Why, gossips, what is it but to laugh in the faces of our godly magistrates, and make a pride out of what they, worthy gentlemen, meant for a punishment?* (the physical enunciation of the utterance)
Cultureme: Criticizing Hester Prynne implicitly and enunciating the pract in that specific context creates a further cultureme.

The above example further shows how implicitly criticizing Hester for her ill-deed continues to be part of that public trial of Hester Prynne before the Puritan congregation to further

buttress the dramatic situation and to further incriminate Hester and to justify the punishment she is about to suffer for the rest of her life. **The Cultureme of criticizing Hester Prynne implicitly** would not have been possible without all the surrounding circumstances and contextual repertoires that contribute to the production of effective Culturemes. It is evident thus far that Hawthorne uses effective Culturemes in The Scarlet Letter in very specific contexts of situation. This specificity of usage indicates that the production of Culturemes happens only in **unrepetitive contexts**, meaning that every produced Cultureme is a unique result of applying effective pragmemes in their pertinent contexts. No Cultureme is produced without a repertoire tailored for the sake of a specific high-order cultural schemata. The answer to the question at the beginning of this paper: Do speech acts exist as such as influential verbs in context or as distinctive entities called "Culturemes"? is that Culturemes are genuine manifestations of situated speech acts, pragmemes, and they are unique entities relying almost entirely on unrepetitive contexts of situation.

7. CONCLUSION

Understanding cultural schemata thus and their role in generating practs in either verbal or written discourse is important for creating contextualised unique meanings. It is worth mentioning that "Cultural schemata are represented in a heterogeneously distributed fashion among the members of a speech community" (Sharifian, 2016) Cultural pragmatic schema produce speech acts that in turn produce specific pragmemes, which can be manifested in various practs that are encapsulated in their effective Culturemes as per the following figure:
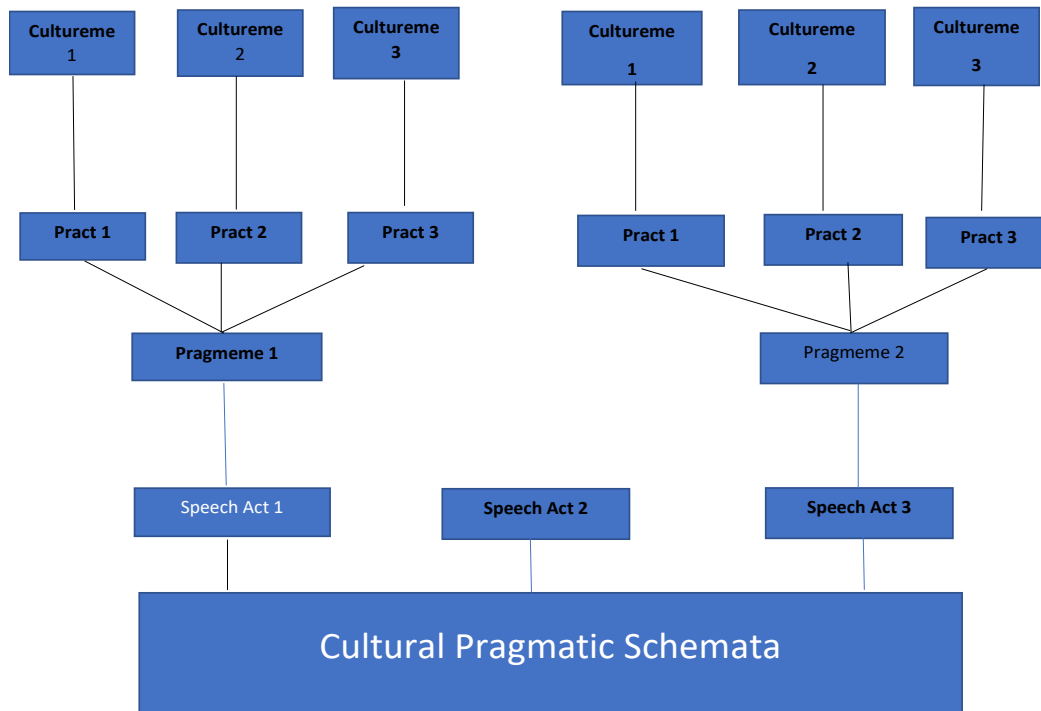

Fig.1 Cultural pragmatic schema

8. BACK TO BINARY OPPOSITIONS

Having explicated the importance of context and its uniqueness in producing linear meanings using efficacious Culturemes in their pertinent contexts, the Roman intellect proves itself as efficacious as ever in presenting binary-oppositional meanings analogous to those first created between Rome and its peripheries, a binary system that helped people rationalize their thought and found their linear philosophies.

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