

Perspectives in Pragmatics, Philosophy & Psychology 4

Alessandro Capone  
Jacob L. Mey *Editors*

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# Interdisciplinary Studies in Pragmatics, Culture and Society

 Springer

# Perspectives in Pragmatics, Philosophy & Psychology

## Volume 4

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Editors

# Interdisciplinary Studies in Pragmatics, Culture and Society

 Springer

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Alessandro Capone



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# Introduction: Pragmatics, Linguistics, and Sociocultural Diversity

Alessandro Capone and Jacob L. Mey

We are pleased to introduce this new volume on *Pragmatics, Culture, and Society*. As Kecskes (2014) says in his introduction to his *Intercultural Pragmatics*, there are many works around on pragmatics and a new volume is (only) justified on the basis of some unique features that differentiate it from others. In this chapter, we want to explain to what extent the present book is different from other works dealing with issues in theoretical pragmatics.

We hope, and modestly predict, that our book will trigger further interest in the important issues addressed here—issues which are normally neglected in the linguistic syllabus, as (theoretical) linguistics is mainly concerned with the formal aspects of semantics and syntax, thereby being divorced more and more from societal linguistics. It is also our hope that our work will inspire further discussions and works on what broadly may be called “societal pragmatics,” or a “pragmatics seen through the prism of society” (see Mey’s article in the present volume). While a “social” or societally oriented pragmatics has been often the Cinderella of the linguistic syllabus, being taught only in those departments where there already is a (stronger or lesser) emphasis on sociolinguistic matters, we hope that one of the salutary effects of the present volume is to reverse this unfortunate trend. Considering that language, as stressed by Lo Piparo (2003), is at the heart of our social institutions (something that also the chapters below on language and the law amply demonstrate), the unhappy divorce alluded to above has dehumanized linguistics and probably led many linguists astray, making them devote their attention uniquely to the formal aspects of language and neglect language in its use in day-to-day communication among people.

As to its origin, the study of a social pragmatics can be partly found in the study of human behavior in general (by sociologists, psychologists, economists, rhetoricians, and so on), partly in the interest that linguists developed in the various forms of socially oriented and socially colored language use (such as dialects). With

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regard to the former, the scientific interest remained purely static-descriptive (as in the disciplines, now mostly obsolete, of sociometrics and sociography). In particular, the study of variation in language was either perceived against a historical background, or studied in the context of modern society; these interests crystallized respectively around the kernel disciplines of historical dialectology (with its emphasis on “Wörter und Sachen,” in the tradition of the Swiss dialectologist Jakob Jud; 1882–1952), and around the burgeoning discipline of sociolinguistics in its extended form, where the object of study included not only the regional dialects of a language but also other socially stratified and gender-determined varieties of speaking, later augmented by an interest in professional speech, in religious and educational discourse, in infants’, children’s, and adolescents’ talk, in forms of language use characteristic of certain current genres (such as texting and rapping), and so on.

It is customary to partition the union set of social, behavioral, educational, psychological, economic, and linguistic interests in language according to whether their practitioners consider themselves either as dealing with *linguistic* theories informed by a social, psychological, economical, etc. point of view, or with theories of the phenomena in question as subsumed under a *social* perspective. In the first case, we usually refer to these theories as belonging to *sociolinguistics*, while in the second case, we talk about the *sociology of language*. Unfortunately, this distinction, while practically motivated as a division of labor, does not make much sense in a wider, theoretical perspective. First off, the social linguistic phenomena can be theoretically distinguished, but not be separated in the real world. And then, the other way around, since all language presupposes a social formation, both for its origin and for its use, no human social formations can historically be imagined without implicating language and its users.

The early sociologists of language concentrated on description. According to the Nestor of North American researchers in the field, Joshua Fishman (1926–), what is needed is “a reliable and insightful description of any *existing* patterns of social organization in language use and behavior toward language” (Fishman 1972, p. 47; emphasis original). Such patterns are drawn upon in attitudes and policies towards phenomena such as bilingualism (Fishman 1972, pp. 52–53), in debates as to whether or not to influence language use and development through various policies, in particular when it comes to interfering with language attrition or language shift, and engaging in efforts to bring back languages from the brink of extinction (compare the current discussions on “endangered languages”). By contrast, in an early article, the British linguist John R. Firth (1890–1960) stressed the need to study what he termed the “context of situation” (Firth 1964, p. 66), a term that originally goes back to the Polish-British anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942), and was to echo in the work of sociologists, sociolinguists, and pragmaticists throughout the decades to come; the social semiotics of Michael Halliday (1925–) comes to mind as a prime instance. Firth’s own notion of “serial contextualization” precludes on what Fishman came to call “the dynamic sociology” of language (1972, p. 51), a notion which comes pretty close to what we consider to be a social pragmatics. And finally, among the US sociolinguists who made their mark during the past century, one should not omit to mention John J. Gumperz (1922–2013), whose pioneering



work started as “advanced dialectology” (in his early work on local Norwegian ways of speaking), but eventually matured in his studies of “contextualization” that have built bridges across territories where few had wanted to go, in the intersection of linguistics and anthropology.

One other researcher who devoted his entire life to creating a synthesis of the two aspects mentioned here was the Frenchman Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002). Starting out from his personal experiences in Algeria during the independence wars, he gradually embraced a comprehensive view of human activity, rather than considering it a deterministic reaction of individuals to preestablished conditions and emerging stimuli; since “it is necessary to abandon all theories which explicitly or implicitly treat practice as a mechanical reaction, directly determined by the antecedent conditions and entirely reducible to the mechanical functioning of preestablished assemblies [or] models” (1979, p. 73).

Individual activity does not, by itself, lead to societal organization; the fact that people *act* in some kind of collectivity does not automatically index the presence of *interaction*. But in order to coordinate the activities involved in social practice, humans have to communicate; the development of language is related to this practice, in particular the tool-making and tool-using processes that are specific for human activity and depend on *communicative* interaction: that is, individuals interacting with (or sometimes against) one another, while communicating under the aegis both of nature and of what Jacques Rancière (1940–) has characterized as the “equalities and inequalities” that are the primordial parameters of any society, but in particular of our own, late-capitalist social formation (Rancière 1995, p. 19; see Mey 1985, Chap. 3.3).

A purely descriptivist model of studying human activity does not explain this societally initiated and oriented interaction; on the other hand, as Bourdieu remarks, “the truth of the interaction is never entirely contained in the interaction” (Bourdieu 1979, p. 81); rather, it is the conditions of society that vouchsafe and sanction the ongoing action, which always occurs in a climate of “equalities and inequalities.” Only if these oppositions are resolved in common human interaction, a commonsense world, with a “commonsensical” system of values, may be established. This value system is “taken for granted” by all, “endowed with the objectivity secured by consensus on the meaning of practices and the world” (Bourdieu 1979, p. 80).

The “objectivity” that Bourdieu here mentions is not the kind of objectivity that we attribute to a scientific experiment; rather, it is located in what he calls the “objective intentions” of the interactive process, not to be confused with the subjective intentions of the interactants. For Bourdieu, the principle governing societal interaction is the human habitus, conceived of as the “internalization of [society’s] objective structures as dispositions” (*ibid.*)—which, because they are not bound to a particular place or time or individual, are called “transposable” (“portable,” as one would say today). The habitus is dialectically placed between the objective conditions, encountered as “nature” or “world,” and the subjective categories through which we interpret them. The human activity aims at overcoming contrasting societal tendencies such as equality versus inequality, fact versus “view,” personal preference versus the common good, immigrants as threatening aliens versus im-

migrants as indispensable workforce, and so on and so forth. These oppositions are neither purely objective (in the sense that one can “prove” them experimentally) nor are they created solely in the mind of the beholder, as it is often argued in today’s public debates, when it comes to discussing problems of integration and assimilation with reference to the immigrant population.

By stressing the role of activity and interaction in the production and reproduction of society, Bourdieu has laid the groundwork for an objective evaluation of the societal formation, whose “sexual division of labour, domestic morality, cares, strife, tastes, etc. produces the structures of the habitus which become in turn the basis of perception and appreciation of all subsequent experiences” (1979, p. 78). Consequently, the habitus is needed to guarantee an effective practice of communication through language, using the linguistic structures and constructions that are anchored in our nature and culture. In Bourdieu’s pithy formulation, “[habitus is] structured structures turning into structuring structures” (1979, p. 73), “history turned into nature” (ibid., p. 78), our *natura secunda*, to borrow a term originally due to Aristotle, but famously adopted by St. Augustine.

At the time when Bourdieu began his anthropologically inspired analysis of the use of language in society, there were not many works available dealing with what was to become societal pragmatics—in stark contrast to the abundance of works dealing with the formal analysis of language, and in particular compared to the proliferation of books and articles written in the Chomskyan tradition of transformational grammar. Here, we can only provide a very short review of some important newer publications. Work on the ethnography of language, with ramifications for both linguistics and linguistic anthropology, started with Dell Hymes’ seminal study (1974). Hymes’ work focused on the societal rules of a speech community which are fundamental in providing the meaning of utterances in specific situational contexts. This trend was continued and emphasized in Stephen Levinson’s magisterial conspectus of pragmatics (1983), where the chapter on speech acts contains a rather critical review of speech act theory, complemented by a long chapter on the emerging discipline of conversation analysis; here and elsewhere, Levinson underscores that only a contextualized analysis of speech acts, which takes into account their sentential position in conversation, can resolve speech act theory’s perennial problems. Important work was also done by Geoffrey Leech in his efforts to systematize the polite uses of language within a societal pragmatics framework. Leech (1983) showed that utterance production/interpretation is also a matter of concern for the face of the co-participant(s), not just that of the utterer (1983). Further work was done by Penelope Brown and Levinson (1987) on politeness as universal face strategies, revealing that in particular indirect speech acts are produced in order to protect the face of the co-participant(s), by avoiding the imposition of obligations which would threaten the latter’s freedom of action and speech.

While “B&L” (as the book is often referred to in shorthand) has been criticized for its emphasis on negative politeness and its exclusively Western orientation, this single monograph has actually triggered a plethora of works on politeness, including important books by Holmes (1995), Eelen (2001), Mills (2003), Watts (2003), Culpeper (2011), just to mention a few. The short treatise by Jenny Thomas (1995)

on *Meaning in Interaction* is one of the first works to apply an explicit societal perspective on language, illustrated by an abundance of well-chosen, real-world stretches of dialogue. Here, the focus is on social (inter-)action and the situational context, as well as on the communicative competence of the co-participants in the interaction. For Thomas, meaning is always negotiated: it emerges from interaction through a series of reactive moves (see also Kecskes 2014; Mey 2013 on this emergent, sometimes called “sequential,” concept of meaning). John Searle’s later (1996) work is unique (in contrast to his classical, earlier writings on speech acts as such) in that it considers speech as a means for the social construction of reality—reversing the classical sociolinguistic point of view, and prelude to later and contemporary “constructivist” views, in which language is not just interpreted in context—rather, language *creates* social context (in particular social institutions). Norman Fairclough’s (1995) book is among the first thematizing what came to be called “critical discourse analysis”; it looks at the way power and ideology interconnect and find ways to influence social conduct through the manipulation of language. Fairclough’s work became very influential also among linguists (along with related work done by Teun van Dijk; see also below) and spurred a series of works on critical discourse analysis, including important work by Ruth Wodak (2011). Jef Verschueren’s (1999) textbook on sociopragmatics places likewise a strong emphasis on contextual analysis of meaning, where meaning is understood in large chunks of texts, not being limited to the semantics of a sentence (see also Cathérine Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2010 and her concept of the “polylogue”). In a narrative framework, Neal Norrick provides an analysis of communicative practice in storytelling (Norrick 2000). Writing from the perspective of a conversation analyst, Norrick makes it clear that the issue of narratives is important in that it can throw light on societal and cultural practices. It also lends itself to crosslinguistic analysis. Like Verschueren’s book, Mey’s (2001) is a textbook on pragmatics with a strong emphasis on contextual analysis of meaning, where the broad context includes reference to the societal background. Mey broached the notion of the *pragmeme*, a fully contextualized unit of meaning, whose relation to Wittgenstein’s language games has been explored by Carapezza and Biancini (2014); see also Capone (2005, 2008, 2010b), Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2010), and Cimatti (this volume). Leila Monaghan and Jane Goodman (2007) edited a collection of papers on language and culture, with strong emphasis on sociocultural competence. Alessandro Duranti (2006) is an important collection of papers expressing the point of view of scholars who are interested in how meaning, culture, and society interact; likewise, Anna Wierzbicka (2006) importantly contributed to issues of language and culture. In Kecskes’ (2014) survey of works on the sociocultural investigation of language (with an emphasis on intercultural pragmatics), the main claim made is that context is not only presupposed but also creative. In a vein similar to Searle’s, Kecskes sees participants in intercultural interactions as not just relying on a presupposed, cultural context, but as having to create an “ad hoc” context, which is “emergent” thanks to the accurate and conscious dissemination of cues and clues. Other important considerations on the pragmatics of texts can be found in the earlier mentioned paper by Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2010).

Overall, the ambition of the present volume is to bring together topics that pertain both to theoretical pragmatics and to societally and culturally oriented linguistics. While the individual contributions come from the ranks of the linguists (and in a few cases, the philosophers of language), the emphasis is on pragmatics and society and pragmatics and culture. A first input to this volume is due to Jacob L. Mey (1979, 1981, 1985, 1993, 2001 and subsequent publications). Mey's main concern is with societal pragmatics: How can pragmatics shed light on societal structures and, conversely, how do societal structures influence communication? In this respect, societal pragmatics and intercultural pragmatics (in the sense of Kecskes 2014) have to be seen as interconnected; even though intercultural pragmatics, with its emphasis on "emergent" norms of interaction, which are created as ad hoc resources which keep the interaction going, and without which the interaction could not proceed, may seem to represent a tendency towards autonomy, interestingly, Kecskes himself has suggested the plausible generalization according to which the very norms and presuppositions that emerge in this intercultural context are going to play a major role in intracultural communication as well (on this, see also further below).

Further input was provided by Jock Wong's paper on the triple articulation of language which appeared in the *Journal of Pragmatics'* Special Issue on Pragmemes (2010). Wong is certainly right in assuming that pragmemes have a cultural orientation; this idea was taken up by Capone (2013) in his paper on the tension between semantics and pragmatics. Like Wong, Capone believes that pragmemes are indexed to the culture in which they are immersed; whereas in some cases, pragmatic principles are modularized—an apparent violation of Occam's (modified) razor, which compels us to avoid unnecessary entities, including unnecessary principles. One way out of this theoretical impasse is to follow the ideas put forth by Wong on the triple articulation of language and claim that in certain cases (like academic or legal discourse) the modularization of pragmatic principles is due to the necessity of indexing a certain discourse rule to a certain culture.

Another non-negligible influence on the present volume is found in Kecskes' recent, powerful arguments in favor of a mutual exchange of ideas between theoretical and intercultural pragmatics (see Kecskes' chapter in this volume). Consequently, the book contains papers by theoretical linguists and/or philosophers who present theoretical conceptions lying at the intersection between abstract studies of language and a societally or culturally oriented linguistics (see the important chapter by Allan on politeness in this volume). To take another example, Davis' suggestion (this volume) that pragmatic principles act in a conventional way to constrain pragmatic interpretations strongly evokes the idea that pragmatic principles may be modularized. Owing to its philosophical background, Davis' chapter may appear out of place in a pragmatic theory of language use, yet it is related to the Wittgensteinian idea of "language games" with their internal rules of usage, and thus represents ideas that can be integrated into a societal pragmatics. Even though Davis does not present his theory explicitly in this way, still, if one is allowed to press the Wittgensteinian connection, Davis' ideas mark a step forward towards a societally construed pragmatics.

Van Dijk's recent work (2008) on critical discourse analysis represents a further input to the present book. Possibly (as some have argued), van Dijk's (and especially his followers') strand of research places too much weight on ideology. However, the picture of a societal pragmatics that emerges in this line of research must be applauded, inasmuch as it clearly demarcates the connection between pragmatics and society. Ideology is seen to operate behind the scene in many forms of communication. The ideological bias of language use constitutes a rich reservoir of ideas that has not yet been adequately exploited. An extremely interesting area of inquiry could be the investigation into how mass media (in particular television or radio programs) manage to hide information from the general public. One would like to know, for example, why the mass media rarely talk of public investments in weaponry and of military expenses in general, and how they manage to obscure these important issues by selecting and emphasizing others. Thus, lately, the language of the mass media, with rare exceptions, has been biased towards expressing and supporting the ideology of those in power. A case that springs to mind is how Italian reporters were able to obscure information on ex-prime minister Berlusconi's inappropriate lifestyle by using "referential opacity"—if a reader, foreign or Italian, does not know that the Villa Grazioli, where the alleged inappropriate facts happened, belongs to Berlusconi, he or she is not likely to grasp the importance of what happened there, just by following the media reports—the connection to Berlusconi has been effectively erased by the reporters.

Being aware that critical discourse analysis deals with important contemporary sociopragmatic and cultural issues, we asked Linda Waugh to write, together with her associates, a comprehensive chapter on critical discourse analysis; likewise, van Dijk was asked to contribute a chapter. Another important chapter on critical discourse analysis is the one by Cornelia Ilie in the present volume.

Franco Lo Piparo's influence on one of the editors of this volume (Capone) played another major role in the present volume's coming together. Lo Piparo (an authority on Wittgenstein; cp. Lo Piparo 2010) insisted, as did Wittgenstein, that language games are as a "life-form." This expression could indicate that language games must be studied as forms of societal life, being capable of self-propagation via cultural transmission. Another possible interpretation is that language use itself is truly alive, being in constant flux, due to societal influences; through cultural transmission, language is capable of being transformed by the users, who bend it to their needs and according to their own cultural presuppositions (as, for instance, demonstrated in Capone's chapter in the present volume on what pragmatics can learn from the law; see further below).

Robyn Carston's (2013) paper on legal language, eminently opened another way to studies on pragmatics and society and thus acted as a powerful inspiration for the present volume. We consider this to be an important development, as more and more scholars seem to move in the direction of a societal pragmatics (Mey 2001; see also Butler's and Morra's chapters in this volume). As already mentioned, Capone, on reading the vast literature on pragmatics and the law, noticed that this particular discourse is mainly informed by Wittgensteinian ideas on language as use and on contextualism. His chapter in the present volume points out that norms

of use are themselves subject to contextual interpretation and therefore are variable and subject to change in subsequent generations of usage.

Other important influences on this book have been the earlier mentioned work by Norrick (also this volume) and Edda Weigand's seminal books and articles (most recently, Weigand 2010), respectively, grounded in conversation analytic and dialogic approaches. Weigand in particular has been adamant in claiming that language is based on, and influenced by, its dialogic format. The dialogic pattern of initiation and reaction guarantees that speakers come to a mutual understanding of what is said in interaction. Especially in intercultural and intracultural communication, it is important that the speaker's intentions be clear and public. The pattern of action and reaction (or initiation and reaction), while acting as a metalinguistic guarantee for ongoing talk, at the same time clarifies the interactants' intentions, to be negotiated or modified in ongoing interaction; compare the emergent notion of communication as brought out by Kecskes (2014 and the present volume), writing about emergent presuppositions. Likewise, authors Gregoromichelaki and Kempson suggest that attention to dialogic concepts may provide useful input to discussions regarding the classical concepts of competence and performance (see their chapter in this volume).

Societal pragmatics has been advocated, and given new vigor to, by Mey in his book on *Pragmatics* (2001; 1st ed. 1993). Mey considers pragmatics as dealing with the macrostructures of interaction (also called the sociocultural context or the "situation of use")—macrostructures which influence and, to a certain degree, determine what happens at the micro-level. Thus, his "pragmeme"—basically a communicative macrostructure, potentially but not exclusively comprising a speech act—has to be seen as integrated into a holistic societal compound (also see Weigand 2010 on this volume). The interactional macrostructures, however, are dependent not only on previous or subsequent talk but also on the general societal "affordances", on what is "in the air," that is, the macrostructures relating to culture and society, such as norms for linguistic or nonlinguistic action (see Kecskes 2014; see also Donal Carbaugh's chapter in the present volume on language and culture, Louise Cummings' important chapter on clinical pragmatics, as well as Sarah Blackwell's chapter on society and discourse). Placing emphasis on cross-cultural analysis is certainly fruitful; in particular, analyses focusing on the expressive function of language (expressing grief, uttering condolences, and, in general, comforting the bereaved) show that there is much more to meaning than truth-conditions. In the present volume, this expressive dimension of language is also the focus of the chapter by Javier Gutiérrez-Rexach and Patricia Anduezaín.

The theory of argumentation or "pragmadiialectics" was originally developed by the late Rob Grootendorst and his colleague Frans van Eemeren. The chapter by the latter, coauthored with Bart Garssen, has been included under the heading of societal linguistics, as "pragmadiialectic" issues are, in fact, not only of relevance to discourse analysts but also crucial in illustrating how institutions and societal structures emerge. Argumentation being at the basis of persuasion and being needed for obtaining political consensus, a theory of how language provides input to argumentation and in effect steers argumentation, is crucial in determining the process of consensus building, itself an indispensable preliminary to any political

discussion and decision. Unlike critical discourse analysis, the theory of argumentation shows the explicit resources which can be put at the service of political purposes—politics here is not taken in its negative connotations (“politicking”), but as a positive force of society, being synonymous with (political) representation. Thus, rhetoric and argumentation are put to the service of political purposes, inasmuch as political consensus is built on the idea of representation (an idea skillfully exploited by Barack Obama in his speeches; see Capone 2010a on this).

On seeing so many titles of articles and books that are of relevance to the current work, the reader may come to the conclusion that, after all, societal pragmatics (or “sociopragmatics”) is a widely represented area of research, with a considerable representation across the entire spectrum of linguistic studies. In fact, the works cited above, and those represented in this volume, are but a drop in the ocean of linguistics and language-related studies. The real state of affairs is that increasingly more formal approaches to language (including pragmatics) threaten to strangle any divergent work and, in particular, reduce the territory allotted to societally relevant pragmatic studies day after day. Rather than being seen as a polemical remark, this should serve as a salutary reminder that, while societal pragmatics indeed can and does thrive (and what we have seen so far is only the tip of the iceberg), yet much work remains to be done before sociopragmatics is admitted as a full-fledged member of the linguistics club. Here, it behooves us to recall that just as a huge effort was expended in establishing linguistic politeness as a sociocultural universal, thereby opening a breach in the hedges guarding the linguistic domain proper, much work, too, can be done from a crosslinguistic point of view on issues such as indirect reporting, quotation as a social practice, the pragmeme as an overarching phenomenon of speech (see Mey 2001), the theory and practice of narrative (see Norrick 2000), the language of public encounters in politics (see Fairclough 1995), health care, education K-12, etc.

Altogether, the contributions to the present volume indicate that there is a current and indeed resurgent interest in issues connecting language and culture in a societal context. By offering a wide array of views and perspectives on matters related to a societal pragmatics in its widest sense, the editors hope to have contributed to an increase in interest in these matters, not only quantitatively (in number of works) but also qualitatively (by heightening the level and upping the ante of the debates).

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**Part I**  
**Theoretical Foundations**

# Pragmatics Seen Through the Prism of Society

Jacob L. Mey

**Abstract** What do we mean when we talk about pragmatics as seen through a societal prism? Is not pragmatics by definition soci(et)al? In this chapter, I explain my views on pragmatics, and highlight its societal character, interpreted as a commitment to and from the *users*' side. I especially look into the oppressive aspects of our language, and suggest ways and means to prevent such oppression, in an “emancipatory pragmatics,” as it would be appropriate to call it.

**Keywords** Pragmatics · Societal linguistics · Meaning and Use · Speech Acts · Pragmatic Acts · Emancipatory Pragmatics

## 1 By Way of Introduction: A Bit of Prehistory

The word “pragmatics” originates from the Greek. It is derived from the substantive *prágma* “action, act.” In classical Greek, one may call someone a *pragmatikós*, i.e., “a man of action,”—a bit like we do when in Danish we refer to such a person jokingly as a *praktisk gris*, literally “a practical pig,” meaning “a jack of all trades.” The adjective “pragmatic” is likewise used in modern times, in keeping with the classical tradition, to characterize the actions of people who distinguish themselves by being just “practical”: They suggest, or undertake, opportunities for action, as opposed to mouthing empty phrases. Compare also that in classical (as in modern) Greek, *tà prágmata* can refer to any kind of practical matters: On a hot day in the summer of 1956, while looking for the baggage depot in the Piraeus railway station, I was pleasantly surprised to have the porter refer to my stuff, in the classical way, as “my *pramata*”!

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Although the ancient Greeks in this way were the original sponsors of our use of the term “pragmatics,” they never developed any philosophy or school, which could be labeled “pragmatic.” This is not to say, though, that they never used pragmatic considerations in their philosophical reflections. The Socratic dialogues, for instance, provide shining examples of a practical application of language, in ways very similar to what we today would call ‘pragmatic.’ In conversations with his students and colleagues (including the occasional bystander or passerby), Socrates always focused on the “thing” to be discussed; cf. a subtitle like “*Perì tou hosíou*” (“About the sacred”), assigned to Plato’s *Euthyphro*. Actually, one could well imagine Socrates as saying, with a modern French politician, “What is it we are talking about here?” in order to refocus a pointless and never-ending parliamentary debate.<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, the Greek Sophists, often held in contempt because they used their pragmatic knowledge of the language to earn a living, were successful because they knew how to use the language in practical situations such as court proceedings and inheritance issues. In these situations, it was of the utmost importance to use language’s opportunities for practical application (its ‘pragmatic’ aspects, one would say today), for instance, by catching the opponent in an improper use of a technical term, or neglect of an important distinction of legal terminology. Such an attitude to language’s more refined uses is nowadays often referred to in English as “sophisticated”—a term that in no way carries the negative implications that would be connoted, were one to qualify one’s opponent as a “sophist,” or his or her use of language as “sophistry.”

The word “pragmatic” itself, used as a technical philosophical term, however, does not appear until much later than the times of those early pragmaticists, the Sophists. In 1781, the great German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) published an essay with the title “Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View,” in which he emphasizes the human ability to come up with valuable opinions by means of reason; I will return to Kant’s importance for pragmatics later in the chapter (Sect. 2, below; see now also Wilson’s recent annotated edition of Kant’s essay; Wilson 2006).

The North American thinker Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), by many considered as the “true father” of pragmatics (see Fisch 1986, p. 81), did indeed list some “proto-pragmatic” thoughts in his *Notebooks* from the mid-1860s; however, he did not write up his notes until some 40 years later, when he was asked to contribute an encyclopedia article on the subject (the encyclopedia in question was James Mark Baldwin’s (1901 ff.) *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*; see Fisch 1986, pp. 114–116).

Not contented with the purely philosophical aspects of his theorizing about language, Peirce also emphasized the *practical* import of proper language use—*How to Make One’s Ideas Clear* is the title of one of his shorter, more popular contributions (Peirce 1878); here, he called his theory “pragmatism,” to emphasize its difference from what another American philosopher, William James (1842–1910), had named

<sup>1</sup> French prime minister Georges Clemenceau’s (1841–1929) famous line “De quoi s’agit-il?”, which he often used when he had the need to cut through the long, frustrating negotiations surrounding the Versailles treaty in 1919, and the accompanying effort of the five great powers to equitably “redistribute” Europe (See Nicolson 1934, p. 118 ff.).

“pragmaticism,” a view according to which all thought activities are only considered “true” insofar as they are of use to us, in accordance with the popular maxim “whatever works is true,” often attributed (rightly or wrongly) to William James.

Neither Peirce nor James was particularly interested in language as such and its description; nor did they pay much attention to how language works in everyday use (that which today would fall under the remit of pragmatics). Also, the nineteenth century’s growing interest in language’s historical foundations and its contemporary varieties (as studied in classic comparative philology and the more recent field of dialectology; see further Sect. 2, below) were themselves superseded in the early twentieth century by studies focused on language as structure and its systematic description, following Saussure’s (1916) groundbreaking work. As a result, the interest in language as it was being used in society became sidelined as an object of study for the theoreticians of linguistics. In fact, the current revival of such interests, along with the beginnings of a true linguistic pragmatics, took only place decades later; it happened neither in Continental Europe nor in the USA, but in the time-honored university centers of Britain: Oxford and Cambridge.

## 2 The “Pragmatic Turn”

As already intimated, the nineteenth century witnessed a phenomenal and rapid growth in the realm of the sciences: Physics (originally still called “natural philosophy,” with the term “scientific” itself generally considered a synonym of “philosophical”), astronomy, chemistry, biology, all made enormous progress. The students of language(s), mostly still called “philologists” (literally meaning: “lovers of the word”), who ever since the days of the early classical, and later the medieval grammarians and philosophers had been mostly concerned with philosophical and grammatical issues, joined forces with these defenders of “progress” (not just in the scientific sense), the “progressives.”<sup>2</sup> Language, according to this new attitude, should be explored *scientifically*, that is to say, its roots were to be pursued, its evolution and splitting into different dialects and languages were to be catalogued and explained along the lines sketched out by the natural and exact sciences.

The breakthrough of this new science of language (now often called “genetic” linguistics, in analogy with Charles Darwin’s newly established evolutionary genealogy of the vegetal and animal kingdoms) also had a parallel in new ways of describing historical developments, not as mere “sequences of kings and battles,” but as a “history of the people” who had lived and developed in historic times.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The young “United States of Brazil,” created upon the overthrow of the monarchy in 1888, chose as its motto *Ordem e Progresso* (“Order and progress”). And the French philosopher Auguste Comte, whose works became extremely popular among the “progressive middle class,” in particular its military segment, is considered to have been instrumental in nurturing the philosophy which led to the attempted secession of the Southern provinces in the early 1900s, coupled with the rather horrendous internecine fighting that took place in the wake of a failed military coup (see Verissimo 1932 for a novelized account of these happenings).

<sup>3</sup> Green’s *Short History of the English People*; Green 1874) is an example of this new orientation. The quote is from the 1902 edition (p. xxiv).

This kind of “historical” (or more generally, comparative) linguistics celebrated one of its greatest triumphs, when it became clear that many of the major languages spoken in Europe and India came from the same proto-language, Indo-German, as it used to be called in those early days, when the research monopoly held by German scholars from Strassburg to Leipzig and Berlin dominated the field, and established the “historic” endpoints of the evolution as stretching from India to Germany.<sup>4</sup>

Typical of this unique interest in the historical aspects of language studies was a *Greek Grammar* published by the Grazer professor Georg Meyer (1878). This work, despite its title, was no longer a textbook of a particular language (in this case classical Greek), but a thorough historical examination and detailed account of the development of the Greek language’s phonology and morphology, based on a comparison with what had happened in the then known older Indo-European languages, such as Sanskrit, Iranian, Armenian, Balto-Slavic, Celtic, Germanic, and the ancient dialects of Italy, including Oscan, Umbrian, Sabine, Venetic, Faliscan, and, of course, Latin. This, and other works in the same tradition, were all modeled on the iconic handbooks of “comparative philology,” as this brand of linguistics had been developed in the German tradition, with the classical works of people like Karl Brugmann and Berthold Delbrück (*Outline of the Comparative Grammar of the Indo-European Languages*, 1886 and following years), to be joined after the turn of the century by scholars such as the Frenchman Antoine Meillet (1866–1936; see Meillet 1903) and the Dane Holger Pedersen (1867–1953). But even these “historical” scholars were not averse to studying the social aspects of language, especially as they came to the fore in the various dialects of the ancient and modern languages that they studied; generally speaking, the linguists of those times were much more generally (and globally) oriented than most of their modern colleagues, for whom it is important to make their mark in some specialized area of the language sciences.

As mentioned above, in Sect. 1, the early years of the twentieth century were witness to new and different interests beginning to capture the interests of scholars of language. The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), in his early career best known as a pioneer in the comparative branch of linguistics and (unbeknownst to himself) as the “grandfather” of the revolutionizing “laryngeal theory,” which moved the origin of Indo-European several hundred, perhaps as many as a thousand, years back in time (Saussure 1888), gradually moved his interests to what came to be called the “structural” model of language studies. Investigations into where language originated and how it evolved were downgraded in many linguistic milieus in favor of research dealing with the *functioning* of language. The main questions now asked were: How is language structured? and How does language work?

Various metaphors were proposed, some of which enjoyed great popularity; by some, language was considered to be a well-functioning organism, with the attending phenomena of birth, growth, and death; for others, language was more

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<sup>4</sup> They should (and to some degree, could) have known better. Irish was already known to be of Indo-European (IE) origin (which moved the IE language family’s Western boundary to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean), whereas the subsequent discovery of Near East and Central Asian languages such as Hittite and Tocharian confirmed that neither was India the latest (or should we say “the earliest”?) word in the history of what was to become called, with a more appropriate term, an “Indo-European” evolution.

like a mechanical structure, functioning, say, as a clockwork; others again thought of language's internal structure in terms of "building blocks."

The sounds of language and language's formal characteristics were studied in phonology and grammar, respectively, whereas the interest in where those sounds and forms came from gradually waned. In particular, questions such as how people were able to produce and use those sounds and forms in their daily lives did not receive similar attention. Especially the latter aspect, having to do with language's "use" (and its usefulness), was deemed to be unworthy of scientific inquiry, as it did not lend itself to an "exact" description: "we lose control," as Saussure has it, speaking of how to explain changes in language use ("le contrôle échappe" 1949, p. 111). Similarly, the interest in what words *mean* (their semantics) took a backseat to research inquiring how words *work* when combined in phrases and sentences (the study of syntax).

After World War II, when computers entered the scene, linguists adopted a tendency to try and describe and explain linguistic phenomena with the use of mathematical formulas and computer programs that would generate correct strings of words and combine them into understandable prose. So-called generative grammar had its heyday in the second half of the twentieth century, not least due to the influence of linguists such as Noam Chomsky (1928) and his associates, for whom the computer turned out to be the perfect metaphor—not only of language but of human intelligent behavior in general.

In all these endeavors, the emphasis was on an accurate and exhaustive description of the linguistic phenomena. Language was considered as a phenomenon that it was important to identify and explain in the smallest details, using methods of the natural sciences. Hypotheses were lined up and tested, and then either rejected or tied together with new hypotheses, in order to finally arrive at a coherent paradigm of explanation that would take care of all the phonetic, syntactic, and semantic features that together were supposed to account for a language's structure.

What was lacking in this kind of descriptions (or "grammars," as they had begun to be called, with a nod to the earlier traditions) was the *human* factor. The users of language were completely left out of the equation; the important questions that earlier in history been put on the table by the classical, medieval, and later the "Enlightenment" philosophers were completely forgotten—or at least ignored. Questions such as how to express oneself clearly, so that others may understand one (already posed by the Sophists and rhetoricians of old), and more poignantly, what general conditions prevail so that one is able to express oneself, period, were never brought up by those modern grammarians (or for that matter, had been considered seriously by their nineteenth-century predecessors).

Incidentally, the latter question was exactly what the earlier mentioned Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) had in mind, when he interpellated the "transcendental" conditions of human cognition: What is needed for us even to begin to understand ourselves and the world around us? (Kant 1781). Such an inquiry, when applied to language, would involve an examination not only of how we acquire language, but in addition, how we are able to put language to some decent, socially relevant use, and to do something sensible with it in the larger context of society. For language

is more than sounds and grammar rules: It is primarily a way of dealing with the world, as we will see below.

And this is where philosophers again enter the scene. The Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) first became known in the twenties of the last century as the author of the *Tractatus*, a logical-philosophical manifesto in which he holds a reckoning with the zeitgeist's speculative tendencies regarding our use of words, and advocates a strict empirical access to language; as he expresses it in the last "thesis" of his short treatise, "of that which one cannot express in an exact way, one should remain silent."

Twenty years later, after a terrible personal crisis, Wittgenstein (who, despite his family name's baronial connotations, was not nobility, but the scion of a wealthy and well-educated Viennese Jewish family) returned to England, where he had spent a couple of years prior to the Great War, and had become acquainted with philosophers such as Bertrand Russell. Here, too, he came under the sway of the influential group of Oxford thinkers such as Gilbert Ryle (1900–1976), Peter F. Strawson (1919–2006), and John L. Austin (1900–1958), who called themselves the "Ordinary Language Philosophers" (abbreviated "OLP"), and whose main thesis was, as it had been an early British empiricists such as John Locke's (1632–1704; see Locke 1622), that our language is a good enough tool to describe and explain reality: There is no need to create a special terminology in order to be able to think orderly and conduct meaningful philosophical discussions.

Most important in this connection is the OLP group's notion that language consists in "meaningful use," that is to say, the meaning of a term is specified by its use, not by abstract definitions (which would never be able to capture the term's full meaning anyway). Wittgenstein's take on this is reflected in a dictum posthumously attributed to him, viz., that "a word's meaning is its use" (echoing Peirce across the decades).<sup>5</sup>

Partly on account of provocative statements like this and similar ones (perhaps intended to *épater les bourgeois* listeners among his students and professional acquaintances), Wittgenstein remained a controversial figure throughout his life. In addition to being a hot-tempered and feared debater, he did not consider himself above a bout of fisticuffs when it came to defending his ideas (anecdotal evidence has it that he supposedly once endangered the life of the period's most famous representative of logical-empirical thought, Sir Karl Popper, by going at him with a fiery poker; Edmonds and Edinow 2001), and although Wittgenstein never published any further works during his lifetime after the initial *Tractatus* (the *Investigations* and all his later works were published after his death by his trustees), his influence on the "Oxbridge" environment was enormous, especially among the younger generations of students.

As already intimated, the established members of the "Ordinary Language Philosophy" movement were far from always in agreement with Wittgenstein and the various directions his fertile but undisciplined philosophical mind would take him.

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<sup>5</sup> "For a *large* class of cases—though not for all—in which we employ the word 'meaning' it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language" (Wittgenstein 1953, p. 43).



In particular, his later moving away from logic to use, when it comes to establish “meaning,” brought him into conflict with a number of local “greats,” including Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), who initially had encouraged him, and even wrote a “Preface” to the *Tractatus* (a preface later discredited by Wittgenstein himself). And so it happened that his insistence on “use” as the defining element of our lives in and with language only caught the scientific community’s attention in the late 1950s through John L. Austin’s work; the latter’s seminal lectures (delivered at Harvard University in 1956) were published posthumously as a book entitled *How To Do Things with Words* (my emphasis; Austin 1962)

This was also the place where, and the time when, the “pragmatic turn” in linguistics, the scientific study of language, found its first, most concrete and most powerful expression. For Austin, language is a means of action, and conversely, our words are not empty phrases or pure descriptions: They *do* something to the world and its inhabitants. But if language is action, then our words are the tools we use to change the world and exert our influence on our fellow language users; when spoken in a particular situation by a person with the right qualifications, the words may indeed effect a change in the current state of affairs.

Austin’s examples are taken from situations that we all are familiar with. For instance, when in a Catholic wedding ceremony, the priest pronounces the words “I unite you in marriage” (in the original Latin version of the ritual: *Ego vos conjungo in matrimonio*), then in virtue of these words, the betrothed couple are now legally married. By his words, the priest has performed a *linguistic action* on the world, a “speech act,” as Austin would call it. (More about Austin and these linguistic actions in the next section.)

A younger but equally important member of the Ordinary Language Philosophy group was the British philosopher Herbert Paul Grice (1913–1988), initially Austin’s colleague at Oxford and later a professor at the University of California, Berkeley. Grice is best known for having formulated the so-called Cooperative Principle, which states that when talking, people will do whatever it takes for the conversation to succeed. They achieve this by ensuring that their contribution to the conversation is such as is required by the conversation and its participants (Grice 1975). This implies that as conversationalists, we stick to what Grice, basing himself on the classic Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy’s conception of an object’s substance in relation to its accidental properties, enshrined as the current, classical four “conversational maxims” of quantity, quality, relation, and manner (Grice 1978).<sup>6</sup> By “quantity,” Grice means the amount of the information that is conveyed in a conversational exchange (not too much, not too little); with regard to “quality,” it specifies the speaker’s obligation to stay within the bounds of what is recognized as good conversational practice (one should not lie or deliberately say something which is not true); the maxim of “relation” requires the speaker to stick to the topic

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<sup>6</sup> One may wonder why Grice picked just these four, and not also others, from the nine original Aristotelian “*accidentia*.” In particular, the categories of “time” and “place” are more recently being brought into our thinking about speech acts with relation to the context in which those acts are being produced. (On this “sequentiality” in speech acting, see now Mey 2013).

and not say something that is irrelevant; and finally, the “manner” maxim encourages the speaker to practice brevity, not to go off on a tangent, and so on.

It is clear that Grice, when stating these maxims, assumed an idealized conversational situation; in real life, people do not necessarily respect (all of) his rules. But the interesting thing is that a maxim, even when violated, may give us an idea about what the speaker actually intended to convey to us. It is here that the Cooperative Principle comes to our aid. To take one of Grice’s famous examples: A university teacher, when asked to write a recommendation for one of his/her students, notes that the student has always attended the lectures, has a good handwriting, and has otherwise a pleasant personality. Clearly, something is missing here; more specifically, neither the maxim of quantity nor that of manner has been observed, to say nothing about the maxim of quality. By invoking the Cooperative Principle, the person to whom this recommendation is addressed immediately concludes that there is something else motivating this “flouting” of the maxims (as Grice was wont to call it): The professor’s silence about any of the student’s properly academic exploits indicates that the latter probably are not exactly shining, so that they preferably should be passed over in silence. Such a conclusion lends support to the assumption of what Grice and others have called the “implied meaning” of an utterance, viz., the kind of meaning that has to be “extracted” from the utterance via implication; normally, it is exactly that kind of meaning that we tend to lend more weight to than to anything that is expressly stated (Grice 1981).<sup>7</sup> (See further below, Sect. 4, on “indirect speech acts.”)

Grice has often been attacked for not having paid sufficient attention to the realities of life and conversation. Whatever may be the grain of truth in this assertion, it remains a fact that Grice never intended to write a “conversation manual” along the lines of many such works produced during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (mostly for the benefit of the new bourgeoisie needing to make themselves acceptable to the higher strata of society). What does remain a reality in this context, however, is that Grice’s thinking on implicatures and their uses has opened a window onto some of the most fascinating features of human language use. Many (if not all) of the later pragmaticists, irrespective of their personal theoretical orientation, will forever be indebted to Grice for having uncovered this persistent trait in human communication, in virtue of which (to vary St. Paul’s apophthegm) “what we would say, that we do not: but what we do not want to say, that we say” (Romans 7:19).

### 3 Speech Acts

Austin’s point of departure as an OLP is the simple observation that there is a difference between utterances like

<sup>7</sup> The technical term that Grice “concocted” (his own expression!) for this kind of conversational technique is the neologism “implicature,” and as such the term has gained entry into the terminology of pragmatics and speech act theory.

It's cold in here

and

Please be so kind as to close the window.

While the first utterance may be true or false (depending on the thermometer reading), and therefore can either be confirmed (“Yes, it is”) or denied (“I do not think so”), a request for somebody to do anything (like in this case, closing a window) can neither be confirmed nor denied. The request may be accommodated or rejected; alternatively (in what some would call the worst-case scenario), it may be ignored altogether; however, as it strictly neither is “true” or “false,” it has no “truth value” (as the philosophers would say). When I utter “It’s cold in here,” I’m just stating what appears to me as an objective fact, something anybody could verify (or falsify) just by glancing at the thermometer on the wall. But such an empirical check is impossible in the case of a request of the type “Please be so kind as to close the window.” Such an utterance is neither true nor false, nor can it be subjected to any kind of empirical control.

Even so, there is something about the (successful) utterance that “does” something: The window gets closed. And since it in this way accomplishes a task, the latter utterance (if successful) *performs* something in the world of reality; which is why Austin suggested to call such utterances “performatives,” by contrast to the former type, which are purely “constative” statements (Austin 1961; 1962, p. 60).

Of course it is not as if the words, taken by themselves, had this power, the “illocutionary force,” of which Austin speaks (1962, p. 4 ff.). Rather, the words express an intention of the speaker—an intention which, in this case, could be characterized as either a suggestion or a request (to close the window). But also, in this and all other cases, we have to remind ourselves that language is not a magic wand: Any action depending on language use depends, at the same time and *ipso facto*, on the presence of a person, a language user other than the speaker. A member of the “speaking masses” that Saussure used to refer to (“la masse parlante”; 1949, p. 112) has to be willing to do what he or she is asked to do by the speaker’s implicit suggestion or request (usually called an “indirect speech act”; more on this in the next section).

It is precisely this orientation towards (an)other person(s) and, more generally, towards the entire (with a nod to Saussure) “massive” social situation in which language is being used that the philosophers of language and the linguists traditionally have not been paying sufficient attention to; in fact, it is also one of the major weaknesses in the original theory of speech acts (more on this in Sect. 4, below). Even so, with regard to Austin himself, it is evident that his way of looking at language is very different from traditional philosophical or grammatical approaches, according to which sentences (or “judgments,” as they were called in the tradition of the School) are evaluated and classified by the philosophers as to whether they are true or false, respectively, by the grammarians and linguists as to their “(in)correctness.”

Whereas in Austin’s view, the number of *individual* speech acts could well be over a thousand, the different *types* of speech acts may be divided into a few large groups (Austin 1962, p. 149). In the sequel, after Austin’s premature death in 1958, his first and more or less “official” interpreter John Searle (who had been Austin’s

student at Oxford in the 1950s) undertook to refine Austin's classification and make it more precise. In the following, I will stick to Searle's typology (which, on the whole, depends on and extends Austin's with a number of clarifications and simplifications; Searle 1969).<sup>8</sup>

In his book, Searle starts out with discussing the speech act of "promising," and examines what is required for people to make promises legally and responsibly. Among other things, whoever promises something must be sincere in their promise, have the intention to carry out what is being promised, and be able to perform the activities (including the nonlinguistic ones) that the promise entails. In addition, what is promised must be to the other person's (the "promisee's") benefit, since otherwise the uttered words of the "promise" would rather qualify as a threat (as in "If I ever see your ugly face around here again, I promise I will bash it in"). All such conditions (and more could be enumerated) are of the kind that Searle, following Austin, calls "felicity conditions," that is, conditions that have to be met for a speech act to be executed successfully: in Austin's words, to be "happy" or "felicitous" (Searle 1969, p. 57 ff.; Mey 2001, pp. 97–105).

Among the other types of speech acts that Searle enumerates are some that deal with our daily lives' most important and most frequently occurring activities, such as "greeting," "thanking," "congratulating," "well-wishing," "advising," "warning," "requesting," "asserting," and "questioning" (Searle 1969, pp. 66–67). For each of the speech act types concerned, different felicity conditions operate. Whereas certain speech acts are fairly straightforward and rarely have an effect beyond the here and now (for instance, a greeting is a greeting, and normally just that), others, like the standard case of "promising," have implications that exceed the simple utterance's spoken words along several dimensions, both in space, in time, and as to the wherewithal on the part of the speakers; consequently, the act's felicity conditions involve considerably more problematic aspects than the ones usually considered.

To take one example: The promises embedded in most marriage vows imply obligations (promised fulfillments) that (at least verbally) go far beyond the moment of uttering, and extend (at least potentially) to the end of the promiser and promisee's earthly existences. The problem here is that a felicity condition such as that of "being sincere," for a promise extending way into the far future, seems difficult to meet at the moment of uttering, let alone to continue to observe honestly and soberly, considering all the (un)likely events unfolding over a person's lifetime. For although the soon-to-be-married couple promise each other fidelity "till death do us part," it is a fact of life that a large portion (in some societies even the majority) of contracted marriages do not survive the infamous "seven-year itch"; now, being

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<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that the idea of an unbroken, smooth transition from Austin's original, partly unpublished ideas to what has become a more or less "canonical" version of speech act theory in the guise of Searle's interpretation, has come under attack for doing injustice to both Austin and Searle: to Austin, because his original ideas were transformed and "streamlined" into a systematic exposition on which their original author had no way of commenting; to Searle, because it deprived him of the right to be asserted as a prime linguistic philosopher on his own merits. See the lucid exposition of arguments in favor and against these two, irreconcilable "theses," provided in the work of the Brazilian scholar Kanavillil Rajagopalan (esp. Rajagopalan 2010, pp. 75–80; for a comment, see Mey 2014).

aware of that fact, how could anyone sincerely promise his or her partner eternal allegiance, and “a love that should have lasted years,”<sup>9</sup> while at the same time being reminded (by his or her common sense as well (as by Austin and Searle in the *caveats* incorporated in their felicity conditions) that whatever is being promised must lie within the capabilities of both the promisers and the promisees?

A further problem has to do with the *effects* of our language activities. Austin and (most of) his interpreters and followers such as Searle have established (respectively embraced) the well-known tripartite distinction between the actual act of uttering (the “locution”), the particular (type of) speech act involved in the utterance (the “illocution”), and finally the result of the speech activity (the “perlocution”; Searle 1969, pp. 24–25). In our example, the locution is represented by the various utterances that we produce in the “window closing context”; the illocution (the “illocutionary point” or “force,” as Austin calls it) is in the utterances’ belonging to a particular speech act type, here: a suggestion or a request for action; finally, the speech act’s perlocution resides in its effect, viz., that the window is now being closed (alternatively, there is no effect, in which case the speech act has “misfired,” as Austin calls it (1962: Lecture 2); in Searle’s terminology, it is “defective”; 1969, p. 54).

At this point, one might ask whether this particular “perlocutionary effect” actually *is* a necessary condition for a correct (“felicitous”) execution of the request in question: that the window be closed. While evidently (as I said earlier), none of our words are endowed with the power of magic by themselves, such that they might may force a listeners to perform an action, still, on the other hand, in our society it is quite extraordinary for a person to respond to a request such as the above by uttering, for example, “I couldn’t be bothered” or “Will you get off my back please!” But has the request itself, in this case, been in order (“felicitous”)? Here, the opinions among scholars are divided. Consider the following case.

Suppose I want to make a bet. I say to a colleague: “I bet you a thousand bucks that there will be no light-rail transportation in Austin, Texas, for the next ten years” (said after the proposition to allow the Austin City Council to begin planning for an urban rail system was narrowly defeated in the municipal elections of November 2000, and not put on the recent ballots of November 2013 again). Suppose further that my colleague does not respond (either because he or she has not understood what I said, or thinks my proposal is frivolous or mindless, did I then perform a speech act of type “betting”? While there are some researchers who believe that Austin’s “illocutionary force” operates in virtue of the uttered words “I bet you,” most of us would agree with Jenny Thomas, who holds that “[a] bet is only successfully made when the other person accepts it” (Thomas 1996, p. 40; cf. Mey 1993, p. 188).<sup>10</sup>

Considered in the larger context of society, this implies that one cannot ignore the role played by the “other” in a situation where language is actively used. Whereas originally, Austin, Searle, and most other “classical” speech act theorists considered a speech act to have been adequately described and accounted for when the

<sup>9</sup> From the song “For No One” (Paul McCartney 1966). In: *The Beatles Complete*, New York: Warner Bros. Publications, 1979, pp. 236–239.

<sup>10</sup> For an adverse opinion, see Kasher (1982).

conditions for “felicitously” uttering it had been exhaustively stipulated and fully met, in recent years, this trend has been reversed. Contemporary developments in speech act theorizing start out from the assumption that not just the speaker, but also the hearer(s) is (are) involved essentially in the act’s *co-creation*, both essentially, as to the original intention (its “illocutionary point”) and existentially, with regard to the ultimate result (its “perlocutionary effect”). The reason is that all use of language is an *interactionally* situated, pragmatic phenomenon, not something that solely belongs to one of the agents involved, the speaker. In other words,

[i]t is the result that matters: once an utterance is properly placed in its *linguistic* co-text as well as in its entire *world* context, and its effects have become visible, the speech activity in question is established and recognized as a situated, *pragmatic* act. (Mey 2001, p. 190; more on pragmatic acts in the next section)

## 4 The Dialectics of Language Use

Consider again our earlier example, in which a university professor, in the course of his or her lecture, remarks: “It’s cold in here.” One of the students in the audience goes to the window and closes it. What has happened?

To see this, consider the following: The perlocutionary effect of this particular speech act (with the illocutionary “force” or “point” of a statement or an assertion) is exactly the same as if the speaker, addressing somebody in the room, had uttered the words: “Please be so kind as to close that window”—in the latter case, employing a speech act of the type “direct request” (or maybe even a mitigated order: “Close the window, please”). As to the former case, nobody in particular had been explicitly encouraged to close that window, hence no direct speech act of requesting or ordering was involved; but the result is the same as if a fully fledged request had been made, or an explicit, albeit “softened” order had been issued.

What we are dealing with here is a case of so-called “indirect” speech acts being employed instead of their direct counterparts (of requesting or ordering). Two things stand out in this connection. First, “indirect acts” are ubiquitous, actually being (contrary to what one might naively assume) much more widespread than are direct acts; moreover, they are performed almost automatically and usually appear to be utterly unproblematic. Second, the ways of treating such acts have differed widely, depending on the individual authors who have been dealing with them (cf. Thomas 1995, p. 14 ff.; Mey 2001, pp. 111–113). So there seem to be good reasons to subject them to a closer scrutiny.

Let us start by analyzing a fairly common household example of an indirect speech act. Here are some ways one could ask one of one’s neighbors at the dinner table to pass the salt: “Can you pass me the salt?,” “Can you reach the salt?,” “Can you spot the salt anywhere?,” or maybe even: “Isn’t this soup rather bland?” None of these questions are “normal,” “interrogative” questions in the sense that they express a wish to be instructed about one’s neighbors’ motor capabilities, their physical location, their observational acumen, or even their rating of the dishes put

in front of them.<sup>11</sup> Thus, a question such as “Can you hand me the salt?” is definitely not about my conversational partner’s ability to move the salt shaker in my direction; compare that, if he or she would reply along the lines of “Come to think of it, I could,” or maybe even “Let me see what I can do about it,” without passing the salt, I would immediately classify such a person as the familiar guest from hell, the type who absolutely must play the bozo card at dinner parties and other social events.<sup>12</sup> Similar considerations could be offered in the case of other indirect speech acts.

Two things are of interest here. First, we normally do not consider questions such as the above as being *real* questions: They are directly entered onto our mental screen as requests for action on the part of the hearer. Second, such indirect requests are far more common than the corresponding direct expressions (nobody in his or her right mind would utter something like “I request that you pass the salt” in the situation depicted above).

Indirect requests (as all other indirect speech acts) succeed by virtue of what earlier, in Sect. 2, was referred to as Grice’s Cooperative Principle. Here, as elsewhere, the situation provides the needed context for cooperation to kick in, and the indirect request to be correctly registered and acted upon. If I am sitting at the breakfast table, with my soft-boiled egg in front of me, and I ask somebody across the table if he or she can locate the salt shaker, it does not take a big stretch of the imagination, but only a tiny bit of cooperation, for the addressee to jump into action and hand me the salt, without further ado.

One could of course object that in the situation above, what is often called a “bald on” request (“Pass the salt”) would do the job equally well; however, such a formulation of the request will often be perceived as a bit rude, and therefore would normally be accompanied by a “softener” of the type “please” or “if you don’t mind.” In general, English imperative locutions will be accompanied by a “please”—something we all have been instructed to do from kindergarten and beyond.

There is something of a paradox here: We prefer to use a more prolix circumlocution where more economical, “plain language” would be just as effective (at least in theory). But, as we have known ever since Charles Dickens, “circumlocutions” tend to develop lives of their own (think of his “Office of Circumlocution,” in *Little Dorrit*). And perhaps, by rephrasing our wishes and not expressing them directly, we are giving our addressees a choice: When asked if they can spot the salt shaker, they can always say yes, and especially if the item in question (in the above situation) actually is closer to the questioner, point to its location and let the

<sup>11</sup> For a linguist such as Robert Fiengo, “questions represent incompleteness, and by asking questions, the questioner indicates his ignorance” (Fiengo 2007, p. 1; quoted and discussed in Borge 2013, p. 414).

<sup>12</sup> Compare the following snippet of a mother–son dinner interchange, quoted from Beers Fägersten (2012, p. 94):

Extract 6  
 (Kristy is asking Alec to pass the salt, which is located high on a kitchen shelf)  
 01 Kr Can you do it?  
 02 Al (.) Are you asking me if I can do it?  
 03 What are you thinking?  
 04 Of course I can do it!

requester reach for it themselves (maybe while muttering the obligatory “Excuse me for reaching over” in the process, if there is an inconvenience involved for those who are in the path of the person reaching for the salt); alternatively, there may be a number of other good reasons not to immediately follow up on the initial request.

As Thomas has pointed out (1995, p. 119), cultural differences can play a major role here, and many intercultural misunderstandings arise precisely for this reason. In cases like the above, not taking the indirect request at its conventional “face value” of directness may be the only way to avoid or remedy misunderstanding. The following is an example from my own experience.

When, in 1981, I visited Japan for the first time, I took a trip up to Nikko, a city about a hundred miles north of Tokyo, famous for its cedar groves with their many temples and shrines. There was a lot to see there, both inside and outside of the magnificent buildings squeezed in between the dark, impressive, and extremely tall Japanese cedars (called *sugi* in Japanese; its official botanic name is *Cryptomeria japonica*).<sup>13</sup>

At one point of time during my visit, having walked around the temple premises for several hours, I felt a certain natural urge, but could not find any sign anywhere indicating the presence of a toilet. Since at that time, my knowledge of the language was virtually nil, I went over to a kimono-clad young woman, who apparently was there in some official function, and asked her, in English: “Is there a toilet around here?” My question did not have so much to do with the general presence of wash-room installations on the temple grounds, but more concretely with my own immediate personal need for such a facility. In other words, while I could just as well have formulated my question in a direct way, by saying “Where are the toilets?,” instead, using one of the usual English “circumlocutions” available in cases like these, I chose an indirect expression.

To my great surprise, my indirect *request* to show me the restrooms (which posed as an English *question*) was parried by the Japanese lady’s reply in the guise of an English counter-question! The temple attendant’s “Do you want to use?” did not seem to be the proper answer to what I thought was a simple informative question, covering up for a(n indirect) request; but even so, the only reasonable answer in this particular situation seemed for me to be a simple affirmative, so I answered “Yes.” Upon which I was directed to a nearby underground staircase, and told that the men’s room was down the stairs to the left, the ladies’ to the right (which was an important detail, as I was unable to read the Japanese characters, *kanji*, marking the difference). So far, so good.

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<sup>13</sup> Although the trees in question are native to Japan and have been around, cultivated and venerated for hundreds of years, glorified and perpetuated in media as different as Basho’s haiku and contemporary calling cards (or *meishi*; a host of Japanese family names are based on its *kanji*, cf. *Sugimoto*, *Sugihara*, *Sugiyama*, etc.), recently a movement has arisen that dubs the cedar a “serious ecological threat”: Uncontrolled planting in the wake of World War II and its devastations have led to a “cedar takeover,” large swaths of originally diversified arboreal populations being crowded out by *sugi*—a native species gone invasive, one could say.



While my immediate problem had been eliminated in this way, the woman's counter-question still continued to bother me. Why would she ask if I wanted to use the toilet when it was abundantly clear (I thought) that my question implied the immediate use of a toilet, rather than general (or even local) toilet knowledge? What else could my question possibly involve, I reasoned, given the immediate context: A foreign visitor visiting a celebrated attraction, who obviously is in need of using certain of the local facilities that a sightseeing tourist expects to be available in such places?

Most likely, the answer has to be sought in the cultural differences that separate Japanese and English speakers, when it comes to handling indirect versus direct questions. In their native language, the Japanese tend to avoid direct questions and prefer circumlocution or ellipsis. For instance, on one occasion, a Japanese acquaintance of mine, upon seeing a classmate leave the university library and wanting to ask her if she had been able to get hold of the books she needed for her term paper, merely uttered two words: "*hon wa*" (literally meaning "book as-for?," spoken with rising intonation), thereby performing an (indirect) Japanese speech act of "asking for information."

Against this backdrop, my English question in Nikko could have been registered by my Japanese counterpart as unpleasantly "direct" (even though in my own "average standard European" usage of English, it was felt as pretty indirect). Consequently, the temple attendant (who of course could not be familiar with the European way of "asking indirectly") took the question as an "interrogative" one (as I called it above); in order to give a proper answer, she first would have to figure out what was behind the question—what it was that the questioner "had in mind." In other words, my implied, indirect request ("to use the bathroom") was perceived by the Japanese speaker as a direct, information-seeking question. Since the indirect purpose of my question thus was unknown to my Japanese conversation partner, she had to make sure what the point of my (supposedly interrogative) question could be: Why was I interested in the presence of toilets on the grounds? Here, the only logical inference was that I wanted to use one; but for her to be sure of the correctness of this assumption, a further question was needed: "Do you want to use?"

Upon receiving my confirmation, the attendant then proceeded to the next logical step, involving action (in this case, a pointing gesture). In Japan, like in many other countries, the use of public toilets is segregated by gender. In the Nikko case, there were two staircases leading down to the toilets, the one on the left for men, the one on the right for women; therefore, it was imperative for the woman to know about my intentions: Were I to use the toilet for myself, or possibly for a companion of the opposite sex?<sup>14</sup> When these final doubts had been removed, she could (ultimately) resolve my plight by directing me to the proper place of relief.

The example shows the importance of what is called the *societal context*. Usually, when linguists, literary scholars, or journalists talk about "context," they mean the "text" (oral or written), which immediately surrounds the spoken or written words (for example, occurring on the same page or recorded in the same interview;

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<sup>14</sup> The example originally occurs in Mey 1993, pp. 266–267.

this is sometimes called the “co-text”). By contrast, the *societal* context, often called the “situation,” is about the entire environment: including not just the words but also their speakers or authors, along with the particular “worlds” in which they are situated—locally, socially, family-wise, nationally, and even globally. The situation in which a particular utterance occurs (or does not/cannot occur, due to situational restrictions) determines its uptake, and even its understanding (or misunderstanding). In the Japanese example, the temple assistant apparently did not “understand” my question, due to the situation in which we found ourselves, our “contexts”; as a result, the situation did not allow for mutual comprehension—until we had made some adjustments in order to coordinate our situational contexts, which had been completely different.

Conversely, the “context of the situation” can often help us understand a specific (indirect) speech act; this may then result in simplifying the communication, as not everything will have to be stated in so many words.

Consider, for instance, emotional contexts in which the interacting speakers may feel the need to manifest their feelings, yet are at a loss how to properly express them. Here, an indirect speech act may be the only appropriate way to deal with the situation. When offering condolences at a funeral ceremony, for instance, most of us will avoid getting into the “subject,” by naming the sad occasion or even the name of the person whose sad passing we bemoan. Instead, we stick to a standard formulation, emphasized by contextual operators such as a look of empathy, a warm voice, or just a firm handshake. One could say that the situation “takes over” the other means of expression (vocal and otherwise): They are all infused with the *situational* act of “offering condolences.” Without being informed by this “pragmatic act,” the speech act by itself, as expressed vocally, does not carry the same weight as does a situationally adapted, context-specific indirect act.

From what has been said so far, it follows that our situationally determined actions need not be solely or primarily language determined or language oriented. The words, or in general, the linguistic expression taken by itself, may in certain cases be completely or partially expendable. In Japanese, for example, if one does not wish to accept a social invitation (such as to participate in an excursion), or accede to a proposal to collaborate on a project, one generally will avoid any kind of direct refusal; instead, one would say something like *taihen desu* (literally, “it is difficult”), or *zannen...* (“unfortunately”), and leave the rest unsaid. In the Japanese context of situation, such indirect expressions (often accompanied by a rather audible breath intake through the teeth) serve the purpose of “declining an invitation” better than would any number of utterances that directly formulate a negative response.

Considerations such as these have led researchers (philosophers, linguists, sociologists, psychologists, communication scientists, and so on) to start placing more emphasis on the properly *pragmatic* aspect of speech acting. Having success in communication rather than experiencing failure, being understood versus not being understood (or even misunderstood), achieving one’s goals in interaction with authorities instead of having one’s claims denied and being sent away empty-handed, and so on—it all depends not so much on the words we utter (the “speech acts” as such), but just as much, or more, on our understanding of, and correctly handling, the situation in which one’s words are uttered (or not, as the case may be).

Inasmuch as our utterances must fit the situation of uttering, we talk about them as “situation-bound utterances” (Kecskes 2000; see below); rather than calling them, or classifying them, as “speech acts,” we refer to them as “pragmatic acts”—intimating that such actions for a large part depend on the accompanying circumstances, that is, on the context or situation in which the words are used and the acts can be realized (Mey 2001, pp. 96–97).

Taking the notion of “context of situation” seriously, in the sense explained above, implies that all our utterances in principle (to borrow and extend a term coined by Kecskes 2000) are “situation bound,” inasmuch as any linguistic activity is ultimately tied to its environment (its “context”). Against this backdrop, it becomes understandable why current interest in speech acts as such is taking a backseat to studies dealing with pragmatic acts and “pragmemes”—generalized types of acts that can be grouped under a (single or group of) situational heading(s).<sup>15</sup>

## 5 Society and the Language User: A Societal Pragmatics?

When we talk about the context of language use, we cannot leave out that which creates the context in which language is used: the community by virtue of which we exist and through whose prism we perceive, and use our language: aka. *society*. From its very beginning, pragmatics has defined itself in terms of the *language user*, while at the same time also emphasizing that such a definition should take into account the language users’ *societal conditions*; compare:

“Pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society” (Mey 2001, p. 6).

To clarify these “conditions of society” (often referred to by the general moniker “social issues”), let us go back (as we did in the case of the indirect speech act) to the “irregular” (but exceedingly common) case of speech act failure, and ask ourselves: What happens, when a speech act (unexpectedly) “misfires”?

Austin uses the term “misfire” for the case of any speech act that in some way does not reach its goal. And like most researchers after him, including the previously quoted John Searle, he simply lays the responsibility for the success versus failure of the act solely at speaker’s door: It is him or her who has the unique obligation to observe the different conditions and rules that make for successful (“felicitous”) acting; rarely, if ever, are the recipient’s contributions to the act’s success or failure brought into the discussion. Even so, like Henrik Ibsen admonishes us in his *Peer Gynt*, it is of the utmost importance for a speaker to “take his audience into account” so that one is not going to appear on stage like some “dumb devil” (Act 5, Scene 4).<sup>16</sup> Likewise, we should calculate the putative or potential effect of our speech acts, every time we “fire off” one.

<sup>15</sup> On “pragmemes,” see Mey (2001, Chap. 8) and the Special Issue of the *Journal of Pragmatics* edited by Alessandro Capone (2010).

<sup>16</sup> “Se det fik fanden, fordi han var dum og ikke beregnet sit publikum.” (“Look that’s what the devil got because he was dumb, and did not take his public into account.”)

Even seemingly neutral actions (like asking for the time of day) may, if not done right, cause discomfort to the parties involved. In Japan, for example, one cannot just approach a random passerby on the streets and perform a simple speech act of “requesting information” (like “Where is the nearest sushi bar?”), as one would do in one’s Western home country. Like any other action, such a Japanese request should be prefaced by a “preparatory” act, intended to unlock the common space in which any social interaction in Japan has to take place. In practice, this means that one first has to ask for permission to invade the other person’s privacy and enter his or her “territory of information” (to use the late Japanese linguist Akio Kamio’s expression; Kamio 1994). This is usually done by going the standard exculpatory route of uttering *sumimasen*, the universal formula for saying “sorry” (and also doing a host of other things in Japanese), upon which the addressee responds with *hai* (usually translated as “yes,” but basically a standard reply indicating that the communicative channels are now open, and that contact has been established). Only then the action enters a second phase, in which the first interlocutor may proffer his request by saying, e.g., *o-jikan arimas-ka* “Do you have the time?” Failure to observe this pragmatic precondition on any “public” speech acting will prevent one from getting across to one’s addressee; all efforts in this direction will glance off of the invisible metaphoric “bubble” which shields Japanese interlocutors in the public space and prevents them from coming too close—a necessary feature of communicative acting in a culture where the interactants’ mere physical presence often can be quite overwhelming.

The fact that a speech act, in order to be valid and effective, has to be “ratified” (to use Erving Goffman’s term) by the addressee is only the tip of the iceberg, however. Actually, the act will have to be executed in accordance with society’s customs and practices, including all the written and unwritten rules for how to comport oneself in a particular society and how to interact with one’s partners. In other words, we should respect our partners’ respective cultures, also (and especially) when it comes to use of language. In this connection, one may experience unforeseen clashes, as when the one party (involuntarily or unknowingly) moves into the other’s “forbidden zones” (Kamio’s “territories of information”), for example, by making verbal inferences about the other’s mental or physical state. Thus, in Japanese, one cannot properly say to a person “You are cold” (even when the temperatures are subzero), but only “You look cold to me” (see Kamio 1994, p. 82; Mey 2008, p. 258). Alternatively, what a Japanese interlocutor may consider to be a simple, polite question may be experienced by his Western conversational partner as an indiscreet delving into personal affairs. The following may serve as an illustration, based on the author’s personal experiences of life in Japan.

Often, when using public transportation in Japan, I have been confronted with fellow travelers wishing to strike up a conversation. On such occasions, in the train, subway, or airline, I have often been “cross-examined” about my personal affairs by total strangers. My Japanese seatmates in the *Shinkansen* (the “bullet train,” or superexpress running up and down the Japanese islands) would always initiate a conversation by trying to establish my nationality (usually thought to be *doitsu*, “German”), and then gradually progressing to more intimate subjects (was I married,

how many children did I have, what was my profession, what religion did I practice, and so on and so forth). In the beginning, I found such interrogations awkward, but I learned to live with them; one particular property of these conversations was that they (as my Japanese mostly was not good enough for oral interaction) of necessity were conducted in a foreign language (usually English). The “common space” for interaction was, in other words, a priori defined as “other,” which implied that the usual norms and conventions holding for Japanese did not apply, and the information exchanges between a Japanese and a *gaijin* (“stranger”) were, strictly speaking, out of bounds, in more than one sense. A Japanese person would never dream of “pumping” a fellow countryman or countrywoman for data regarding the person or his/her business, either out of mere curiosity or out of interest; for regular interchanges among strangers, there are standard protocols, involving the exchange of calling cards, the ubiquitous *meishi*, with the obligatory ritual of handing over and close reading of the cards, followed by vocal expressions of awe and respect.

Within the Japanese’s own culture, it would be contrary to the respect for other people’s privacy to bypass or ignore these standard procedures. But as soon as one moves into a foreign cultural/linguistic domain, such restrictions do not appear to hold, and a speech act which in one’s own “linguaculture” would be considered a *faux pas*, an act destined to misfire, might be executed happily within the confines of another culture, where the speaker would not be held responsible for an otherwise failing or compromising speech act.

There is an interesting corollary to this observation. While in the above mentioned contexts, a Japanese can freely express his curiosity and interest for a *gaijin* without incurring the stigma of being considered an uneducated boor, conversely, the *gaijin* trying hard to accommodate to the Japanese norms (and maybe partially succeeding) is immediately relegated to the category of “dangerous outsider,” a *bakka gaijin*, that is “a bad foreigner.” The moral of this part of the story is that speaking a foreign language and adopting a culture of social acting that is very different from one’s own carries a non-negligible risk of falling between two “linguacultural” chairs.

While the general impact of these factors with regard to their potential intercultural hazards may not be immediately apparent, on the domestic front by contrast, the differences between the various “linguacultures,” aka. the various dialects of a language and their social implications, do get registered and related to by the users, and in most cases, negatively. When you do not like it in a foreign country, you can always go home, as it is no use trying to “convert” the natives to your own values and cultural perspectives. But what to do when “home” is the problem?

Even within a single society or linguacultural community, there are some “differences that make a difference.” The members of the community who possess the “cultural capital” (to use Pierre Bourdieu’s term), called the prestige language, will always have a stronger voice in the sphere of linguistic and other social activities than do those who lack this communicative “head start.” Particularly, in cases where language skills are a necessary prerequisite to handle a complex social situation (such as applying for a job, dealing with higher-ups in the social system, or addressing the authorities), the presence of (even a trace of) dialect may impair the com-

munication and block a successful transaction. The social client from the boondocks who expresses himself poorly, speaks some obscure dialect, and maybe is not too polite will stand a lesser chance to obtain his legally established right to unemployment benefits than does the articulate academic who (accidentally or seasonally) is out of a job.

The British linguist Alex Baratta has documented the negative influence of dialect use in job application and other contexts, showing that in particular the English spoken in the city of Liverpool (called “Liverpudlian”) carries serious negative connotations. In a recent article (2014, submitted), he states, quoting Trudgill (2002, p. 176), that “‘accentism’ (discrimination on the grounds of accent) is still common in Britain,” and documents his case by recounting the story of “Ari,” a man from Liverpool, whose whole life had been one endless succession of failures and put-downs on account of his accent—in the case of “Liverpudlian” perceived as indexing untrustworthiness and lack of social know-how, in an altogether negative stereotyping (Baratta 2014, p. 2)

One can say without exaggeration that the various social classes each have their own form of language, and although we are all equal before the law, some are “more equal” than others, as George Orwell once put it (in his *Animal Farm*). The fact that some members of the ruling classes in a society such as Britain consider themselves “natural leaders” may be grounded in an antiquated notion of class superiority; but in the pragmatic reality of a country such as England, where some language users encounter other language users with qualitatively better means of communication (such as a “plummy dialect”), such antiquated notions play a bigger role than many people are aware of.

In one of his “mythologies,” the French literary pundit and culture critic Roland Barthes (1915–1980) mentions the case of the French vintner Gaston Dominici, an elderly man who is unable to defend himself in court against the charges of having murdered an English tourist, Sir Jack Drummond and his entire family (Barthes 1957, p. 43).

Domici is from the southern regions of France, the Languedoc, and he speaks the local “dialect” (Occitan, in reality not a French dialect, but a language, related to Catalan rather than French). While for the prosecutor, it is “natural” to use French as the official court language (“as it represents the common sense”), the winegrower’s “dialect” is merely an object of ridicule and contempt. Not only does Dominici not understand what is being said in the courtroom, he cannot defend himself, using his own language; his lawyers are likewise unable to decipher his “dialect.” As Barthes notes, we are dealing here with two different specialized languages: The one is the official language of law and power, the other a strange, homespun, incomprehensible rural “*patois*.” The “power language,” French, describes the accused as an inferior subject, whom it freely condemns and sentences; conversely, by virtue of his inferior “dialect,” the accused acknowledges and affirms the condemnation, and justifies the final judgment passed on him.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Dominici was sentenced to death in 1954, but his sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment, while the debates about his guilt continued. In 1960, he was pardoned by President Charles de Gaulle; he died in 1964. The French actor Jean Gabin later played the title role in a film *L'affaire Dominici* (1974).

In any discussion of the way language works in society, pragmatics emphasizes the role of the *language user*. This is because one cannot detach language from the people using it, nor from the circumstances of their lives. The latter include not only the various societal parameters, like class, gender, income, educational level, dwelling, and so on, but also what one could call people's "existential" characteristics: a person's auto-perception of social status, family relations, people awareness, and conceptions of human dignity.

In one of her songs, the Swedish poet Sonja Åkesson (1926–1977) has forcefully formulated the problem of the language user with special regard to gender-specific availabilities and opportunities for a "female voice" to be heard. She does this in the form of a question: "Why do females have such weak voices?"<sup>18</sup>—referring not so much to the fact that women are not *able* to raise their voices in order to be heard, as to the additional, aggravating circumstance that their voices, their words, are being overheard in our male-dominated society as not being worth listening to. Naturally, when one is convinced that one's words, even when heard, are "falling on deaf ears," one's audience not finding it worth their while to pay attention while one is speaking, one almost automatically lowers one's voice, starts speaking in a low key, and ends up being accused of "mumbling"—which then even further diminishes the need for, and the ability to produce, a carrying voice, or even simply open one's mouth to "seize the floor."

The problem of female language use reveals a typical pragmatic concern: If, by virtue of their social placement, either as a socially underprivileged minority, or as a gendered or racially oppressed segment of society (or perhaps both), language users are prevented from exercising their language rights, we are dealing with a case of what has been called *linguistic oppression* (Mey 1985, p. 209 ff., 2001, pp. 308, 315). This leads us directly back to the main topic of this chapter, by asking: What can a societally relevant pragmatics do to put an end to this state of affairs, and in what ways can pragmatics, seen through the societal prism, furnish the social leverage which would make it possible for us to free us from what Søren Kierkegaard has called the "chains of language"? (Kierkegaard 1845). The next and final section will try to provide an answer.

## 6 Conclusion: A Societal Pragmatics?

According to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1845), language is "humans' concrete, practical consciousness." Varying the well-known German saying *Man ist was man isst* ("You are what you eat"),<sup>19</sup> one could perhaps venture to say: "You

<sup>18</sup> "Varför har tjejer/ så tunna röster?" From the album *Sånger om kvinnor. (Songs About Women)*. Stockholm: MNW Music, 1971.

<sup>19</sup> The saying is perhaps better known in its "Popeye" version, where the beloved Disney character exclaims: "I'm Popeye the sailor man/I am what I yam/..." etc. More serious thinkers attribute the saying to the famous French cook and food expert Brillat-Savarin; however, it is the Germans (especially in the persona of a Ludwig Feuerbach or Bertold Brecht) who have cast the saying in its best remembered popular form.

are what you speak,” meaning that the things we say, and the ways we say them, are closely linked to what and who we are in our societal community: which social class we belong to, what kind of education we have received, who are the people we associate with, and even what kind of religion we profess.<sup>20</sup>

Our practical consciousness manifests itself in many things, but most conspicuously in the ways we look at, and experience, the world around us. It is not hard to understand that what we are doing every day in relation to our world influences the way we go about expressing ourselves, in private conversation as well as in public, official debates, when dealing with our own current activities as well as other people’s (including those initiated by our elected politicians). We consider those activities not only by comparing them to the other events of the day but also, and equally importantly, by evaluating and assessing one’s own activities in relation to what others are doing. In this, we regularly prioritize our own viewpoints (as anchored in our practical consciousness and expressed in our choice of words, our “speech acting”), over those of “the other half of humanity” (or even “the other 99%,” as current popular discourse has it).

Thus, for instance, an employer will inevitably have a different relationship to a work stoppage, and talk about it in different terms, than do the workers who are on strike in order to achieve better pay or a safer working environment. While the capitalists are interested in higher returns on their investment and studiously compare the company’s profit margin to others’, being ready to withdraw their funds and reinvest them elsewhere at the drop of a hat, and the corporation’s CEO and the higher echelons of management primarily look to the upcoming shareholders’ meeting, where they risk being asked unpleasant questions and their very company lives may hang in the balance, the ordinary men and women on the factory floor are worried about their dwindling or vanishing paychecks, or what could happen to them at work, when not all of the legally prescribed safety precautions are in place and properly observed.

Consequently, the words used by these individual users to characterize their respective situations reflect their widely different interests. While the workers are announcing an upcoming “industrial action” (in the guise of a refusal to work overtime, or a decision to “go slow,” or even to stop working altogether by going on strike), the employers prefer to talk about “illegal work stoppages,” perceived as irresponsible actions, supposedly taken by semiliterate individuals, influenced by labor agitators and union recruiters. Clearly, the way we act determines the way we talk; and conversely, talking about the things we do, we use our talk to reinforce our practical consciousness and our very ways of “practicing” our lives.

Consider also the ways we refer to the companies operating in the capitalist modes of production. In the USA and Canada, their societal status is represented by

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<sup>20</sup> From my Dutch childhood, I remember that whereas the Protestants called a missionary a *zending* (literally, an “emissary”), Catholics called the same person a *missionaris*. Similarly, Protestants when referring to Jesus, used a voiced [z]: *Jesus*; Catholics preferred the voiceless sibilant [s], as in *Jesus*. And so on and so forth, down to the smallest phonetic and grammatical details of the language.



the abbreviations they attach to their names, the innocuous “Inc.” merely indicating that they are an “incorporated entity,” a “corporation.” By contrast, in most of Continental Europe, the same companies hide behind various other acronyms and abbreviations. While earlier, they were often called “anonymous societies” (from the French “*société anonyme*”—which puzzled me as a boy: Those companies did have names like Unilever, Shell, Philips, and so on, so how could they be called “anonymous?”), currently, the naming has changed to emphasize another aspect of the companies’ corporate “practical consciousness”: Rather than protecting the anonymity of the shareholders, the new “shorts” refer to the companies’ *limited responsibility* for what they are doing in the nameless stakeholders’ names.

Already early on, the British had devised a term for this: companies with “limited liability” (for short: “Ltd.”), as had the Germans with their “GmbH” (“*Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung*,” which translates seamlessly into English as “Company with Limited Liability”). After the World War II, this kind of naming caught on in the rest of Europe (as in Holland or Belgium, where the earlier “N.V.” (for “*naamloze vennootschap*,” i.e., “nameless society”) was replaced by the unobtrusively altered abbreviation “bv” (for “*besloten vennootschap*” or “closed company”)—without explicitly referring to the “limited liability” that these companies still exhibit in their full names by adding the letters “ba” (for “*bepaalde aansprakelijkheid*,” or “limited liability”).

What these linguistic and terminological shenanigans really illuminate is the various ways capital is covering its tracks: The liability that is “limited” in the various acronyms has only to do with the amounts of money involved, not with the liabilities (or better: responsibilities) that are involved in administering the company’s people-generated funds in a people-responsible way. In other words, by introducing the concept of “liability” for what should be called “responsibility,” the capitalist industrials are pulling the wool over our eyes. At the same time, this naming suggests that the “limited” corporate environment in which the big international companies and their executives operate is isolated from the real world of workers and consumers, all the time that their actions (“limited” not only with regard to the shareholders but also to themselves) have an unprecedented impact on the lives of all those who are living under the conditions of what some fast-tracking thinkers on the Left somewhat optimistically have called “late capitalism.”

The responsibility of pragmatics seen through a societal prism consists in “unveiling” cases of linguistic manipulation such as were discussed above. The use of “veiling expressions” (Mey 1985, Chap. 3) of this kind is often so ingrained, not only in our societal structures but in the very way we think and use language (in other words, in our “practical consciousness”) that we are blissfully unaware of the presence of any “veil” and consequently are unable to penetrate it.

When discussing how to best get out from under the recession that was plaguing the USA and the world for a number of years recently, one of the more adventurous proposals (which, unfortunately, was getting some traction nationally) was to allow a “quantitative easing” to be undertaken by the Federal Reserve (the US institution functioning as what in other countries goes by names such as the “Central Bank”). In its immediate banality, the expression itself, “quantitative easing,” does not seem

particularly daunting; in reality, however, it covers a well-known financial sleight of hand, only all too familiar to the many countries that have opted for this slippery path out of an economic low. By “creating money out of nothing,”<sup>21</sup> allowing the unlimited printing of bills to cover current and past expenses and debts, countries like Germany in the 1920s or Brazil in the 1960s and 1970s chose what turned out to be a dangerous road to hyperinflation—a process that in the end reduced the value of the national currency faster than people could use the precarious bills, with their worthless denominations of billions, even trillions of monetary units.

In the US case, however, the media simply reported that the Federal Reserve needed to “inject \$1 billion more into the economy”—the fact that this money did not represent any real value did not matter for the journalists and the pundits who pontificated on this “wise measure” for days on the public media. Even so, anyone who took a moment to think about it could see that using this kind of language to disguise a highly risky financial move by naming it a “quantitative easing” was tantamount to practicing a cheap linguistic conjurer’s trick; in other words, we were witnessing a typical case of linguistic “veiling.” In addition, since the 2010 “easing” had been preceded by a little noticed, similar maneuver in 2008, the current “easing” now had a number, so that the abbreviation, “QE” joined with the roman numeral for “two,” II, came out as “QEII,” a moniker destined to ease people’s apprehensions by subliminally appealing to such solid rock symbols of stability as the British Crown or the ocean liner named after Queen Elizabeth the Second herself, dubbed “QEII” as well.

Another example comes from the world of medical practice (or malpractice). We are all familiar with the fact that people tend to use circumlocutions to refer to diseases and their symptoms, especially when the talk is of serious cases. Thus, we normally refer to presymptoms of cervical cancer by the medical term of “dysplasia” (literally “wrong formation”; Danish uses the term “celleforandring,” which means “cellular transformation”). When a person in our family or circle of friends dies, we refer to the sad event by saying “so and so passed away,” or just “passed.” But of course this kind of “euphemisms” can also be employed to cover up for less fortunate episodes, like cases of medical malpractice or hospital negligence. The following is a case in point.

In 2007, the US actor Dennis Quaid almost lost his newborn twins in a case of (medical or hospital) malpractice. At the Los Angeles Cedars-Mt. Sinai Hospital, the nurse in charge was supposed to inject the 2-week-olds with a small dose of heparin, a blood-thinning medication. Unfortunately, she ended up giving them an adult dose, which (being 1000 times the prescribed amount) came close to killing both infants. Luckily, the father suspected that something was wrong, and the twins could be saved in the nick of time. Although there was no doubt about who was to blame for the error, the event was billed as a “medical mistake” rather than a case of

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<sup>21</sup> “(quantitative easing) means creating massive amounts of money out of thin air with the hope of getting the economy back on track.” (Adam Davidson & Alex Blumberg, “Quantitative Easing, explained,” National Public Radio, Morning Edition, October 7, 2010).

gross negligence on the part of the hospital (which allegedly kept the vials with the different doses in the same drawer).<sup>22</sup>

Concluding, I want to return to the question I raised initially: Why speak specifically about a “societal pragmatics,” when we all agree that pragmatics is about the relationship between language and language users in the social contexts of their communities and in society at large?

The answer to the question is that pragmatics puts the spotlight on the conditions under which people use their language: on the positive opportunities that society offers them for using their language, as well as on the restrictions it imposes on their usage of words. But in a further perspective, pragmatics also aims, on the one hand, to enhance these opportunities, and on the other, to do away with the obstacles that are rooted in society’s structures, in order to *enable* people linguistically, that is, to have them use their language without being hindered by social prejudice or class-related obstructions.

The practices deriving from this view of a societal pragmatics should ideally start from the time children first learn to use language in their families; later on, in the course of their education and social formation, the schools and other societal institutions (such as day care facilities, sports clubs, interest and hobby groups, churches and religious communities, and so on) become just as (and sometimes even more) important.

In this perspective, it seems merely natural to consider pragmatics as having what I have called an “emancipatory” function, inasmuch as it aims to loosen the bonds that have prevented people from having access to society’s common benefits and privileges (either by nature, by birth, by social origin, or simply by accidental lack of opportunities later in life). In addition, a societal pragmatics that is true to its name should at least take one (or better, several) “proactive” step(s) in the same direction, anticipating language-related social problems and planning ways to preempt them, by capitalizing on the language users’ own abilities and needs, and on the opportunities that already have been, or that will be created for them. This will include an education in practical, societally relevant language use, a use of the kind that is needed in order to have an impact in a public context. The heightened awareness of the social-linguistic problematic that is the focus of pragmatics will help us to better devise our language-related and other educational activities, in order to improve our interaction with the world and our fellow human beings, based on what I have called an *emancipatory* understanding of our placement and practices in society.<sup>23</sup>

In this connection, I would like to mention the Brazilian political activist and educator Paulo Freire (1921–1997) as a main source of inspiration. To Freire, it became increasingly clear that people who can neither read nor write are excluded

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<sup>22</sup> “A medical mistake nearly killed his [the movie star Dennis Quaid] infant twins.” In: *AARP—The Magazine*, September/October 2010, pp. 44 ff.

Dennis Quaid and his third (subsequently divorced) wife later sued the hospital for malpractice; they settled out of court for US\$ 750,000. In addition, Cedars-Sinai Hospital has been fined US\$ 25,000 by the California Department of Public Health.

<sup>23</sup> See Mey 2012, section “Emancipatory Pragmatics.”

from much that is going on in society; in particular, their relations with the public authorities are hampered by a lacking capacity to understand what the official sources and legal documents have to say about their situation. Any opportunities to “manage” their surroundings in order to improve their living conditions depend crucially on their ability to actively use their language in speech and writing. Through becoming “literate”—a process that Freire called *alfabetização* (for lack of a better term, translated into English as “literacy”), by learning to express themselves in writing, they are able to reflect on, become familiar with, and critical of, the social relations in their surrounding world (Freire 2007).

Finally, an emancipatory language in this sense should at the same time be what an anthropologist (the late Robert B. Textor) has called *anticipatory*, in that it applies the thoughts outlined in this piece towards defining and realizing the “degrees of freedom” that characterize a conscious and awareness-raising pragmatics, viewed through the prism of society.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> On “emancipatory anthropology,” see Robert B. Textor, “Practicing anticipatory anthropology with Austrian national leaders.” *Anthropology News*, 50 (1), January 2009, p 21.

See further: Jacob L. Mey, 2012, “Anticipatory Pragmatics,” *Journal of Pragmatics* 44(5), 2012, pp. 705–708, and the references in Jacob L. Mey, *Whose language? A study in linguistic pragmatics*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 1985, and “How to do good things with words: A social pragmatics for survival,” *Pragmatics* 4 (2), 1994, pp. 239–263).

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# Can Intercultural Pragmatics Bring Some New Insight into Pragmatic Theories?

Istvan Kecskes

**Abstract** This chapter argues that the main difference between intracultural and intercultural communication is that the latter, to some extent, shifts the emphasis from the communal to the individual. What standard pragmatics assumes about how things work in communication depends on there being commonalities, conventions, standards, and norms between speakers and hearers. This, however, may not be exactly so in intercultural communication. Commonalities, conventions, common beliefs, norms, shared knowledge, and the like, all create a core common ground on which intention and cooperation-based pragmatics is built. (Of course, there are plenty of varieties within those commonalities.) However, when this core common ground appears to be limited, as is the case in intercultural communication, interlocutors cannot take it for granted; rather they need to co-construct it, at least temporarily. So what is happening here is a shift in emphasis from the communal to the individual. It is not that the individual becomes more important than the societal. Rather, since there is limited common ground, it should be created in the interactional context in which the interlocutors function as core common ground creators rather than just common ground seekers and activators as is the case in intracultural communication.

Consequently, there seems to be a reason to take up the question of how people go about formulating utterances and interpreting them when they cannot count on or have limited access to those commonalities and conventions, and in a sense, they are expected to create, co-construct them (at least a part of them) in the communicative process. What people depend on that makes pragmatic meaning reliable within a speech community—the focus of standard pragmatic theories—becomes more visible when we see the troubles and different routes to success that may arise when those commonalities and/or conventions are missing or limited cross-culturally. This means that we may be able to see and notice things assumed and taken for granted in standard theories by working on intercultural pragmatics.

**Keywords** Socio-cognitive approach · Intercultural pragmatics · Interculturality · Salience · Pragma-discourse · Actual situational context

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## 1 What is Intercultural Pragmatics?

Intercultural pragmatics is concerned with the way the language system is put to use in social encounters between human beings who have different first languages, communicate in a common language, and, usually, represent different cultures (Kecskes 2004, 2010, 2013b). The communicative process in these encounters is synergistic in the sense that in them, existing pragmatic norms and emerging, co-constructed features are present to a varying degree. Intercultural pragmatics represents a socio-cognitive perspective in which individual prior experience and actual social situational experience are equally important in meaning construction and comprehension. Focusing on both oral and written language processing research in intercultural pragmatics has four main foci: (1) interaction between native and non-native speakers of a language,<sup>1</sup> (2) lingua franca communication in which none of the interlocutors has the same L1, (3) multilingual discourse, and (4) language use and development of individuals who speak more than one language.

The socio-cognitive approach (SCA), which serves as theoretical background for intercultural pragmatics (Kecskes 2008, 2010, 2013b; Kecskes and Zhang 2009), defines interculturality as a phenomenon that is not only interactionally and socially constructed in the course of communication but also relies on relatively definable cultural models and norms that represent the speech communities to which the interlocutors belong. Consequently, interculturality can be considered an interim rule system that has both relatively normative and emergent components. Cultural constructs and models change diachronically, while cultural representation and speech production by interlocutors change synchronically as required by the actual situation. Kecskes (2011, 2013b) defined *intercultures as situationally emergent and co-constructed phenomena that rely both on relatively definable cultural norms and models as well as situationally evolving features*. Intercultures are usually ad hoc creations. Koole and ten Thije (1994, p. 69) referred to them as “culture constructed in cultural contact”. They are created in a communicative process in which cultural norms and models brought into the interaction from prior experience of interlocutors blend with features created ad hoc in the interaction in a synergistic way. The result is an intercultural discourse in which there is mutual transformation of knowledge and communicative behavior rather than transmission.

Intercultures are not fixed phenomena. They are created in the course of communication in which participants belong to different L1 speech communities, speak a common language, and represent different cultural norms and models that are defined by their respective L1 speech community. The following conversation (source Albany English Lingua Franca Dataset) between a Brazilian girl and a Polish woman illustrates this point well.

- (1)  
 Brazilian: And what do you do?  
 Pole: I work at the university as a cleaner.  
 B: As a janitor?

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<sup>1</sup> I am fully aware of the fact that the terms “native speaker” and “nonnative speaker” are not the best way to describe language proficiency. However, it is still these terms that make the distinction clearer than any other terms.

- P: No, not yet. Janitor is after the cleaner.  
 B: You want to be a janitor?  
 P: Of course.

In this conversation, interlocutors represent two different languages and cultures (Brazilian and Polish), and use English as a lingua franca (ELF). This is the prior knowledge that participants bring into the interaction. They create an interculture, which belongs to both of them (at least temporarily) and emerges in the course of conversation. Within this interculture, the two speakers have a smooth conversation about the job of the Polish woman. Neither of them is sure what the right term is for the job the Polish woman has. This is what they negotiate. There are no misunderstandings in the interaction because each participant is careful to use semantically transparent language in order to be as clear as possible. When the Brazilian asks for clarification for the term “cleaner,” she is given an explanation. The Polish woman sets up a “hierarchy” that does not quite exist in the target language culture (“cleaner vs. janitor”) but is an emergent element of the interculture the interlocutors have been constructing.

## 2 What Makes Intercultural Pragmatics Different from Pragmatics Proper?

What makes intercultural pragmatics different from mainstream pragmatics is *its multilingual, socio-cognitive, and discourse-segment (rather than just utterance) perspective* as well as the view that considers intercultural communication a *normal “success-and-failure” process* rather than a collision of cultures, in which it is not only the cultural differences and misunderstandings that should be emphasized but also the role of prior and actual situational context and common ground building in achieving success (Kecskes 2013b). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) data, the number of multilinguals exceeds the number of monolinguals in the world. *But if multilingualism is considered “normal,” should this not affect the ways linguists build their models of language, and pragmaticians develop their models of meaning and language behavior?* I argue that given the rapid growth in the number of people in the world who speak more than one language and the increasing importance of intercultural interactions in communicative encounters, the main linguistic and pragmatic models must also be evaluated on their capacity to explain multilingual competence, multilingual language use, and its traces appropriately. However, this is not exactly what is happening. In the dominant, monolingual approaches governing mainstream pragmatics today, anything that is “societal” (Mey 2001) and/or whatever pragmatic phenomenon has not reached “grammaticalized” status (as Levinson calls it; 1983, p. 9) on principle is excluded from consideration in many versions of pragmatics. This is how Mey (2013, p. 488) described the current situation: “...it has been the custom for partisans of linguistics to fire away from their hideouts and shoot down pragmatics (of the ‘wrong’ kind) as being ‘continental’ (Levinson 1983, p. 2), as



‘not stringent enough’ (as one colleague of mine once told her students), or simply as being outside the realm of scientific description (as many linguists and semanticians seem to believe, witness the fact that they, intentionally or unconsciously, omit any mention of the ‘other’ kind of pragmatics in their writings.”

I think intercultural pragmatics may bring something to the fore that standard pragmatics misses, or at least seems to be missing. As discussed above, what standard pragmatics assumes about how things work in communication depends on there being commonalities and conventions between speakers and hearers that can hardly be counted on cross-culturally in the same way as in intracultural communication. Commonalities, conventions, common beliefs, shared knowledge, and the like, all create a core common ground, a kind of collective salience on which intention and cooperation-based pragmatics is built (see Kecskes 2013b). However, when this core common ground appears to be mostly missing or limited as is the case in intercultural communication, interlocutors cannot take it for granted, rather they need to co-construct it, at least temporarily. So what seems to be happening here is a shift in emphasis from the communal to the individual. It is not that the individual becomes more important than the societal. Rather, since there is limited common ground, it should be created in the interactional context in which the interlocutors function as core common ground creators rather than just common ground seekers and activators as is mostly the case in intracultural communication. So the nature of intersubjectivity appears to be changing. *There is more reliance on language created ad hoc by individuals in the course of interaction than on prefabricated language and preexisting frames.* In the case of interlocutors who use a common language and whose L1s differ (intercultural communication), the lack of full control over language skills (L2) and full knowledge of conventions, beliefs, and norms in the target language (L2), used as the medium of communication, may lead to a more conscious approach to what is said, and how it is said. This should certainly affect the way we evaluate speaker production, hearer comprehension, and implicatures in intercultural interactions. Furthermore, in intercultural communication, more conscious recipient design may be involved than in intracultural communication, in which interlocutors do not have to deal with language skill issues and may rely on more spontaneous, (partly) prefabricated speech and less monitoring.

Consequently, there seems to be reason to take up the question of how people go about formulating utterances and interpreting them when they cannot count on, or have limited access to those commonalities, conventions, standards, and norms, and, in a sense, they are expected to create, co-construct them in the communicative process. What people depend on that makes pragmatic meaning reliable within a speech community—the focus of standard pragmatic theories—becomes more visible when we see the troubles, misunderstandings, and also different routes to success that may arise when those commonalities and/or conventions are missing or limited cross-culturally. This means that while working on intercultural pragmatics and analyzing language use in intercultural communication, we may be able to see and notice things that standard theories of pragmatics may miss or just take for granted. For instance, in the Gricean paradigm cooperation is considered a rational

behavior of human beings. It is essential that human beings are cooperative in the course of communication subconsciously and automatically. In intercultural communication, however, this rational and subconscious behavior is enhanced with a conscious, often monitored endeavor of interlocutors to be cooperative and make deliberate efforts to comprehend others and produce language that is processable by others. So it is even more emphasized that the goal of coming to an understanding is “intersubjective mutuality...shared knowledge, mutual trust, and accord with one another” (Habermas 1979, p. 3).

Another positive outcome of research in intercultural pragmatics can be the attempt to reconcile micro and macro perspectives on language, culture, and interaction. The micro perspective includes the study of interactions between individuals, and the cognition underlying those communicative encounters. The macro perspective deals with establishing norms, patterns, and expectations about language use in speech communities. The SCA (Kecskes 2010, 2013b), which is the underlying theory of intercultural pragmatics, calls for the integration of the micro and macro perspectives. “Intercultures” are good examples of this integration.

### 3 The Multilingual Perspective

As mentioned above, there has been a long-standing problem in pragmatics-oriented research. Communication is becoming more and more intercultural because it involves interlocutors who have different first languages, communicate in a common language, and represent different cultures (Kecskes 2004). However, as discussed above, theoretical pragmatics does not appear to pay much attention to this issue and remains predominantly English-based and monolingual. Major issues of pragmatics are researched and discussed in a monolingual framework lacking or excluding any explanation of, or reference to the applicability of ideas, theories, and research findings to bi- and multilingual scenes. Why is this lack of interest in multilingual framework in theory development a problem? What is wrong with the monolingual view, if anything? Well, the problem is that the monolingual view seems to presuppose that rules of communication, ways of communication, communicative principles, and interpretation and production processes are basically universal—they are the same or very similar no matter what language we use and/or what language we are talking about.

Nobody denies that human communication contains many universal features. However, a close look at bi- and multilingual language production and comprehension as well as intercultural interaction demonstrates that language- and culture-specific features are just as important as universal features. A person who speaks two or more languages may share the universal features with a monolingual speaker but he/she will have to consider and use the synergistic blend of two or more different sets of culture-specific, language-community-specific rules and features that will result in production and comprehension in both languages which is not exactly the same as the language production and comprehension of a monolingual speaker

of either language. *A bilingual is not two monolinguals in one body* (cf. Grosjean 1989). Bi- and multilingualism is characterized by a unique synergism of more than one language and culture, which significantly affects how bi- and multilinguals behave and use language. Consequently, there are, for instance, differences in how a bilingual English—German speaker uses his English and German from how a monolingual English speaker and a monolingual German speaker use his/her language (see Kecskes and Papp 2000).

However, we should neither underestimate nor overestimate the fact that someone has two or more languages in his/her mind. According to Gumperz and Gumperz, *monolingual people and multilingual people do not differ in what they do with language, but in how they do what they do* (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2005). For all communicators, let them be mono- or multilinguals, language is a tool with the help of which they want to achieve their communicative goals. Different language and cultures significantly affect the selection of means and ways. Bi- and multilingual people's communication with one another and monolingual speakers should not be conceived of as something distinct from everyday communicative interaction. People with more than one language are not abnormal communicators. They are normal communicators whose communicative actions are affected by the knowledge of more than one language and culture. According to Blommaert (1998, p. 3), it is a mistake to consider intercultural communication only as a matter of colliding cultures and cultural gaps, something that is abnormal. He argued that the "abnormalization of intercultural communication is based on a gross hypostasis of 'culture' as the all-eclipsing contextual factor, and a massive overestimation of the degree and the nature of differences in speech styles. The way in which empirical answers can be found for patterns and problems in intercultural communication is a detailed and nuanced analysis of concrete communicative events." This is exactly what intercultural pragmatics attempts to do.

Cultural expectations and experiences that members of a speech community attend to are the main variables that motivate the use of available linguistic means. Jakobson (1959, p. 236) pointed out a crucial fact about differences between languages in a pithy maxim: "Languages differ essentially in what they must convey and not in what they may convey." This claim offers us the key to unlocking the real force of language. If different languages affect our minds in different ways, it is not because of what our language allows us to think but rather because of what that language habitually obliges us to think about. It is the "habitual" (or better to say customary) that culture builds into language use. This has a profound effect on how implicatures work in intracultural and intercultural communication. When two English native speakers talk, and at the end of the conversations one of them says, "I'll talk to you later," he implicates that he has finished the conversation. Recognizing the customary pattern (to end a conversation), his partner infers that the interaction is over. When implying and inferring, they both rely on customary patterns, conventions, and norms. However, in intercultural communication, interlocutors can hardly build on this type of implying and inferring. Two problems can occur: Either the given "custom" (signal the end of the interaction) is missing or the custom exists, but it is differently lexicalized in the dominant language of the speakers. Both can lead to the wrong inference. In our example, the hearer, not being a

native speaker of English may process the utterance “I’ll talk to you later” literally, and wait for the call of the speaker.

## 4 The Socio-Cognitive Approach

What intercultural pragmatics attempts to offer is an alternative way to think about pragmatics. It tries to bring together the two seemingly antagonistic lines of pragmatics research: The “individualistic” intention-based cognitive-philosophical line and the “societal,” context-based sociocultural-interactional line. This is a necessary attempt because we human beings have a double nature: We are both individuals and social beings at the same time. This fact is reflected in our communicative behavior. Recent neurological experiments on mirror neurons can be interpreted as confirming human beings’ double nature as well as the interaction of their abilities (Arbib et al. 2005).

One of the main differences between the cognitive-philosophical approach and the sociocultural-interactional approach is that the former considers intention an a priori mental state of speakers that underpins communication, while the latter regards intention as a post-factum construct that is achieved jointly through the dynamic emergence of meaning in conversation. In this process, sociocultural factors play the leading role. Since the two approaches represent two different perspectives, it would be difficult to reject either of them entirely. The complexity of the issue requires that we consider both the encoded and co-constructed, emergent sides of intention when analyzing communicative processes. The SCA serving as the theoretical foundation for intercultural pragmatics intends to do that.

SCA was proposed by Kecskes (2008, 2010, 2013a, b) and Kecskes and Zhang (2009) as an attempt to unite the two perspectives by emphasizing that there is a dialectical relationship between a priori intention (based on individual prior experience) and emergent intention (based on actual social situational experience), and egocentrism (individual) and cooperation (social).

In this approach, interlocutors are considered social beings searching for meaning with individual minds embedded in a sociocultural collectivity. SCA argues that Grice was right when he tied cooperation to the speaker–hearer’s rationality. However, egocentrism must be added to speaker–hearer’s rationality. We human beings are just as egocentric (as individuals) as cooperative (as social beings). “Egocentrism” in the SCA refers to attention bias that is the result of prior experience of individuals. It means that interlocutors activate and bring up the most salient information to the needed attentional level in the construction (by the speaker) and comprehension (by the hearer) of the communication. So there is nothing negative about egocentrism if the term is used in this sense, as distinguished from egotistic behavior.

Communication is a dynamic process, in which individuals are not only constrained by societal conditions but also shape them at the same time. As a consequence, communication is characterized by the interplay of two sets of traits that are inseparable, mutually supportive, and interactive:

Individual traits	Social traits
Prior experience	Actual situational experience
Salience	Relevance
Egocentrism	Cooperation
Attention	Intention

Individual traits (prior experience → salience → egocentrism → attention) interact with societal traits (actual situational experience → relevance → cooperation → intention). Each trait is the consequence of the other. *Prior experience results in salience which leads to egocentrism that drives attention. Intention is a cooperation-directed practice that is governed by relevance which (partly) depends on actual situational experience.* Integrating the pragmatic view of cooperation and the cognitive view of egocentrism, SCA emphasizes that both cooperation and egocentrism are manifested in all phases of communication, albeit in varying degree.

Communication is the result of the interplay of intention and attention motivated by sociocultural background that is privatized individually by interlocutors. The sociocultural background is composed of environment (actual situational context in which the communication occurs), the encyclopedic knowledge of interlocutors deriving from their “prior experience,” tied to the linguistic expressions they use, and their “current experience,” in which those expressions create and convey meaning. *In communication, we show our two sides. We cooperate by generating and formulating intention that is relevant to the given actual situational context. At the same time, our egocentrism means that we activate the most salient information to our attention in the construction (speaker) and comprehension (hearer) of utterances.*

A crucial element of SCA is privatization (making something private, subjectivize something), a process through which the individual blends his prior experience with the actual situational (current) experience, and makes an individual understanding of collective experience. The following example from the film “Angel Eyes” illustrates this process. Mother and son are talking, while the mother is examining the groceries the son brought. She knows that his son had a fight with a man that morning.

(2)

Son: I met someone today.

Mother: Good. Oh, you got the broccolini? Thank you.

Son: She is a woman.

Mother: You did not have to tackle her too, did you?

Son: She is a police officer.

Mother: Are you in trouble?

Son: I don't think so.

The utterance “I met someone today” sets the scene; it partly creates the actual situational context. The son wants to talk about his current experience. However, the mother’s attention focuses on the groceries. She starts to get interested when the son says that the person he met was a woman. However, even then she does not pay full attention, rather she jokes about a previous event the son talked about.

When the mother finds out that the woman her son met was a police officer, the son gets her full attention. She wants to know if he was in trouble. It is clear that they have a different understanding of “police officer” which usually has a highly conventionalized negative context attached to it (collective salience). The actual situational context cannot override this stigmatism for the mother as her question “are you in trouble?” demonstrates. However, her son’s public context (collective salience) is changed (privatized) as a consequence of his positive experience with a police officer. As a result of this private experience, the term “police officer” loses its negative connotation for the son.

*Privatization* is the process through which the interlocutor “individualizes” the collective. This process is prompted by the actual situational context, and results in a dynamic process of meaning construction in which nothing is static. The two sides (prior and current) constantly change and affect each other. Meaning construction relies on both relatively definable cultural models and norms and situationally evolving features. In this process, prior experience is represented in relatively definable cultural models and norms that are related to and/or blended with actual situational experience. This approach is supported by the Durkheimian thought (Durkheim 1982), according to which cultural norms and models gain individual interpretation in concrete social actions and events.

## 5 Discourse Segment (Rather Than Just Utterance) Perspective

Pragmatics is an utterance-based inquiry. However, research in intercultural pragmatics (e.g., House 2002; Kecskes 2007) demonstrated that in intercultural communication participants are creative on discourse level rather than on utterance level. This is mainly due to limited language proficiency that may result in, among other things, not-very-well formulated utterances. So an analysis based on the Gricean modular view may not result in correct interpretation of speakers’ intention. The following interaction between a Pakistani, Columbian, and Chinese speaker illustrates this problem.

(3)

Pak: You said you live with your son. So your wife is not here.

Ch: Yes, I am alone, I am with my son.

Col: Will your wife come to visit?

Ch: Yes, she came yesterday.

Pak: Did she come from China?

Ch: Yes, she arrived from Nanjing.

An utterance-by-utterance analysis will not necessarily lead to a clear interpretation of what the Chinese speaker wants to say because the utterances taken one by one are ambiguous, clumsy, and containing contradicting pieces of information. For instance, the first and second part of the utterance “Yes, I am alone, I am with my

son” contradict each other. However, if we look at the whole dialogue sequence or discourse segment, the meaning that the Chinese speaker tries to convey (he lives alone with his son and gets visits from his wife from Nanjing) becomes clear. It is not surprising therefore that intercultural pragmatics encourages not only an utterance-by-utterance interpretation but also goes beyond the utterances and analyzes the whole dialogue or discourse segment.

Beyond utterance, analysis is an issue not only in intercultural pragmatics but also in other subfields of pragmatics. Recently several papers have talked about “narrow pragmatics” and “wide pragmatics” discussing the relationship of pragmatics and discourse analysis (e.g., Puig 2003; Taboada and Mann 2006; De Saussure 2007; Van Dijk 2008a). The issue of beyond utterances analysis has also been on the agenda of dialogue studies (e.g., Weigand 2010a, b; Cooren 2010). The importance of these studies is that they consider language as action that is always something that is shared. Whenever someone appears to act, others also proceed into action. They also emphasize that communicative function and communicative agenda are two separate things.

Currently there seem to be three different approaches represented in the broader field of pragmatics. Firstly, there is a strong *pragma-semantics approach*, which is pursued by the followers of Grice and a number of scholars with a referential-logical background, and with various degrees of commitment to truth conditionality (e.g., De Saussure 2007). This trend is mainly interested in the construction of meaning by the hearer, through cognitive or formal models. Secondly, there is a *pragma-dialogue approach*, which calls attention to the dialogic nature of communication by emphasizing that interlocutors are actors who act and react (e.g., Cooren 2010; Weigand 2010a; Kecskes 2012). So the speaker–hearer not only interprets but also reacts to the other interlocutor’s utterance. The basic dialogic principle is that human beings are dialogic individuals (social individuals) who communicate in dialogic interaction not only by producing and understanding utterances but also by acting and reacting (e.g., Weigand 2010a, b). The dialogic principle defines dialogue as a sequence of actions and reactions. Thirdly, there is a view that looks beyond the utterance and pays special attention to socially determined linguistic behavior. I have called this trend “pragma-discourse” (e.g., Kecskes 2012).

## 6 Pragma-Semantics, Pragma-Dialogue, and Pragma-Discourse

Analyzing trends in pragmatics, De Saussure (2007) argued that “pragma-semantics” focuses on the theory of human language understanding, assuming a “bottom-up” view where global—discursive—issues are explainable by local semantic and pragmatic phenomena. The top-down, holistic view of pragmatics is represented both in pragma-dialogue and pragma-discourse (Kecskes 2012). They focus on a theory of speaker’s productions of utterances within structural patterns of dialogue

and discourse, assuming a “top-down” view where issues concerning single utterances are explained by global discursive or social constraints.

### **Pragma-Dialogue**

Pragmatics analyzes individual utterances (organized set of words) in context. A dialogue is a sequence of utterances—a reciprocal conversation between two or more entities. It is an effective means of ongoing communication. Buber believed that genuine dialogue can be obtained between two people “no matter whether spoken or silent” (Buber 1955). Buber further claimed that, “each of the participants really [must have] in mind the other or others in their present and particular being and turn to them with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation between himself and them” (Buber 1955, p. 22). More simply, genuine dialogue can be understood as a momentary experience in which participants are consciously aware of the other(s). Preserving the original Buberian idea of dialogue being a reciprocal conversation in which interlocutors are consciously aware of the partners’ current researchers of dialogue studies; e.g., Weigand (2010a, b), Cooren (2010), Tracy and Craig (2010) go one step further and emphasize that dialogue is constituted by the interactive purpose of coming to an understanding, which is based on the sequence of actions and reactions as the following conversation demonstrates.

(4)

Action-directive Bill: Can I get a cup of coffee?

Info-request Sara: Milk?

Signal-non-understanding Bill: Hm?

Info-request Sara: Do you want your coffee black?

Agreement Bill: Oh yes, thanks.

Weigand (2010b) argued that action and reaction are not two actions of the same type which are arbitrarily connected and only formally distinguished by their position in the sequence. Action and reaction are functionally different types of actions: Action is initiative, while reaction is responsive. Reaction demonstrates the degree of understanding (see “adjacency pair” in Schegloff and Sacks 1973).

According to Weigand, orthodox speech act theory that is exclusively based on illocution should be adjusted. She continues by arguing that Searle’s theory of conversation is based on single illocutionary acts that are put together by what Searle (1995, p. 26) calls “collective intentionality”, and ignores the interdependence between action and reaction. Although Searle’s collective action aims at a communal goal, it is not a dialogic act yet. Weigand claims that individual actions and reactions are organized into a dialogic sequence by their interdependence. Searle’s speech act theory focuses on the communicative functions of speech acts (assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, declaratives) and says less about the communicative agenda of interlocutors. To interpret an utterance properly, the interlocutor has to arrive at an understanding not only of its communicative function of utterances but also of the communicative agenda of his/her dialogue partner, i.e., what he/she really wants to achieve in the dialogue. The underlying interests of the dialogue partners become evident through dialogic sequences.



### Pragma-Discourse

The basic difference between pragmatics and discourse is that while pragmatics analyzes individual utterances (organized set of words) in context, discourse focuses on an organized set of utterances. The relationship between the constituents of utterances (organized set of words) and the constituents of discourses (organized set of utterances) is quite similar. Analysts assume that utterances have properties of their own (which are not the properties of single lexical items) and discourses also have their own properties (which are not the properties of single utterances). Consequently, an utterance is not the sum of lexical items that compose it, and discourse is not the sum of utterances that compose it either. Both utterance and discourse represent “third space” (cf. Evanoff 2000), which is not the sum of components but a qualitatively different entity. Intercultural communication represents a transactional model of communication (cf. Barnlund 1970) which moves beyond merely understanding or “respecting” cultural differences towards creating a “third culture” which combines elements of each of the participants’ original cultures in novel ways (see discussion on “interculture” above).

The “third-culture” perspective fits intercultural pragmatics as example (3) demonstrates. An utterance in itself in intercultural communication may make a different sense when analyzed separately, than when it is analyzed within a whole discourse segment. As mentioned above, research (e.g., House 2002; Philip 2005; Kecskes 2007) has demonstrated that in intercultural communication participants are creative on a discourse level rather than on an utterance level. I do not mean to suggest that we should reject the “discourse as a process” view (represented by Sperber and Wilson, Recanati, Carston, Moeschler, and others) in its entirety. SCA supports the hypothesis that there exists a higher level of information besides the structural and propositional ones that are attached to single utterances in context (cf. De Saussure 2007; Moeschler 2010, Van Dijk 2008b). However, this does not mean that we should ignore the *contextual single-sentence interpretation* that gives the basis for pragmatics research. In intercultural pragmatics, we need both the single utterances and span of utterances (dialogic sequence, discourse-segment) approach if we want to give a fair analysis of what is communicated by interlocutors. *Single utterances are reflections of individual human cognition, while utterances spanning over a discourse-segment reflect sociocultural, environmental, and background factors.* And the goal of intercultural pragmatics is to bring these two sides together.

An important claim in intercultural pragmatics is that utterances in pragmatics research need to be analyzed from the perspective of both the hearer and the speaker. I have argued in some of my papers that current pragmatics theories are hearer—rather than speaker-centered (Kecskes 2010, 2011, 2013a). One of the main reasons of this hearer centeredness is the Gricean modular view that requires splitting the interpretation process into two phases: What is said and what is communicated. Dialogue studies, however, eliminate this division and talk about action and reaction (e.g., Weigand 2010a; Cooren 2010). So the concept of the hearer and speaker turns into the concept of the interlocutor who plays both roles. Human beings are speakers and hearers at the same time. They not only try to understand the utterance of the speaker but also react to it in their own utterance. The reaction shows the

degree of understanding of the action (speaker's utterance). There does not seem to be separate production and comprehension, rather, human beings always evaluate and react verbally or mentally to what has been said. However, in pragmatics, in some sense, we analyze the two sides separately (production and interpretation). There is nothing wrong with that. But if we focus on the speaker and want to figure out *why the speaker said what he said the way he said it*, we need to use not only an utterance analysis but also a holistic, top-down approach (see above), and have to analyze the discourse segment (pragma-discourse) rather than just the utterance (pragma-semantics) in order to find cues that help us identify the real intention of the speaker. This means that the key to speaker meaning may be found not only in the given utterance itself but also in utterances, utterance chunks, or cues in the dialogue sequence or discourse-segment.

## 7 Some Issues That Intercultural Pragmatics Has Brought Forth

In this section, I will briefly discuss some issues that intercultural pragmatics has directed attention to. The different perspective may shed a new light on the issues to be discussed.

### 7.1 *The Interplay of Intention and Attention in SCA*

In the SCA, the interplay of cooperation-triggered intention and egocentrism-governed attention is the main driving force in meaning production and comprehension. Cooperation means that attention is paid to others' intentions. Successful communication requires communicators to recognize that others' perspectives may differ from their own and that others may not always know what they mean (Keysar and Henly 2002). SCA posits a dialectical relationship between intention and attention. As previously argued, both the pragmatic view and the cognitive view are concerned about intention and attention in an isolated way. There is no explicit explanation of the relations between the two. Relevance theory defines relevance by effects of both attention and intention, but does not distinguish the two effects and never clarifies their relations explicitly, as revealed by their claim that "an input (a sight, a sound, an utterance, a memory) is relevant to an individual when it connects with background information he has available to yield conclusions that matter to him" (Sperber and Wilson 2004, p. 3).

*Intention* With regard to intention, the socio-cognitive view on the one hand incorporates the Searlean understanding of the term (Searle 1983), and on the other, it extends the notion to emphasize the dynamism of intention and its emergent nature. SCA not only considers the centrality of intention in conversation, just as the cognitive-philosophical approach has done, but also takes into account the dynamic

process in which the intention can be an emergent effect of the conversation. In SCA, intention is considered a dynamically changing phenomenon that is the main organizing force with attention in the communicative process. Intention is not only private, individual, preplanned, and a precursor to action but also emergent and social. Here, it should be underlined that we are not talking about a dichotomy: Rather, *a priori intention* and *emergent intention* are two sides of the same phenomenon that may receive different emphasis at different points in the communicative process. When a conversation is started, the private and preplanned nature of intention may be dominant. However, in the course of conversation the emergent and social nature of the phenomenon may come to the fore. These two sides of intention are always present; the question is only *to what extent* they are present at any given moment of the communicative process. This view does not contradict Searle's claim that intentionality is directedness; intending to do something is just one kind of intentionality among others (Searle 1983, p. 3). It is also in line with Joas' claim that intentionality consists in a self-reflective control which we exercise over our current behavior (Joas 1996, p. 158).

Haugh and Jaszczolt (2012) also argued that in tracing intentions in conversational interaction, it becomes apparent that intentions can also be characterised as being "emergent," as both the speaker and the hearer jointly co-construct understandings of what is meant (Kecskes 2010, pp. 60–61). To demonstrate this, Haugh and Jaszczolt (2012) used Kecskes' example (2010, p. 60) arguing that John's initial intention to give Peter a chance to talk about his trip is not realised in the excerpt in (5).

(5)

John: Want to talk about your trip?

Peter: I don't know. If you have questions...

John: OK, but you should tell me...

Peter: Wait, you want to hear about Irene?

John: Well, what about her?

Peter: She is fine. She has...well...put on some weight, though.

Kecskes suggested that John's original intention is sidelined by Peter talking about Irene, perhaps because he thinks John might want to know about her (she being his former girlfriend). He argued that "it was the conversational flow that led to this point, at which there appears a kind of emergent, co-constructed intention" (Kecskes 2010, p. 61).

So intention is not necessarily just an a priori phenomenon; it can also be generated and changed during the communicative process. This dynamism is reflected in emerging utterances: They may be interrupted and started again. It is not only the context but also the dynamism of the conversational flow and the process of formulating an utterance that likewise affect and change the intention. Intention as understood by Searle dominates L1 communication, while emergent intention is the driving force in intercultural interaction. *In L1, both intention generation and intention interpretation rely on the relatively similar sociocultural background that the members of the given speech community share, while this is not the case in intercultural interactions where core common ground may be limited.* In the following excerpts

between an African French and a Korean speaker, the interlocutors appear to jump from one topic to another, seemingly changing their intention and interrupting the flow of communication. However, a closer look shows that communicators think along topic-comment lines, and co-construct a coherent narrative in which emergent intention plays an important role. The topic-comment lines are as follows: living in Albany—likes/dislikes—likes: quiet, nice neighbors—dislikes: offices and forms.

(6)

K: I like living in Albany. Because the Albany is the...especially I [word] almost two months...it's quiet...nice people...neighbor...

AF: Yeah you have nice neighbors.

K: Yeah, yeah.

AF: The manager in the apartment is good?

K: Yeah good.

AF: ah...so you have good neighbors...it's quiet...good...so everybody has difficulties where they live so since you came from Korea what kind of difficulties you...what are the problems that you have to live in Albany?

K: Ah I came...when I came here...the first time about...I applied the driver's license and you go to there.

AF: Yeah.

K: DMV...yeah yeah...driver station.

AF: Yeah.

K: And then they require so many documents.

AF: I see.

K: So I had to go another office.

AF: To apply to school.

K: Yeah social number or...officer...anybody...anyway I had to go there and then...receive the document I gave them...so long time I...take a long time.

*Attention* Attention refers to those cognitive resources available to interlocutors that make communication a conscious action. When intention is formed, expressed, and interpreted in the process of communication, attention contributes to the various stages of the process with different strength. Three factors will affect salience of knowledge and ease of attentional processing in all stages: (a) interlocutors' knowledge based on prior experience; (b) frequency, familiarity, or conventionality of knowledge tied to the situation; and (c) the interlocutors' mental state and/or the availability of attentional resources. Based on these three factors, the knowledge most salient to the interlocutors in a particular situation is the information that is included in their knowledge base, is pertinent to the current situation, and is processed by the necessary attentional resources. No matter what mental state the interlocutors are in, and at which stage of the communication they are operating, the most salient knowledge will be available as a result of the interplay of these three factors.

All stages in the communicative process require the commitment of attention in order for successful communication to occur. As stated above, cognitive research (e.g., Giora 2003; Colston and Katz 2005) has documented the interlocutors' egocentric behavior in the process of communication. As explained earlier "egocentrism" is not a negative term in intercultural pragmatics. *It means that interlocutors act under the influence of the most salient information that comes to their mind in*

*the given actual situational context in both production and comprehension.* Consequently, the speaker will use the linguistic resources (e.g., the lexical units) which he/she thinks are most salient for expressing his/her communicative intentions and/or goals. Similarly, the hearer will cooperate by capturing those salient units and assigning them a proper place in the communicational process. Because of their different knowledge bases, the frequency/rituality of their knowledge in the situation, and the attendant attentional resources available to them for processing the salient items, the interlocutors' knowledge has different levels of saliency. As a result, the attentional processing of communication is conducted in an egocentric manner.

There are specific ways in which attention contributes to different stages of communication as characterized by the processes of intention (Kecskes and Zhang 2009; Kecskes 2013b). When intention is formed, attention plays a crucial role. Consider the following (construed) example:

- (7)  
 Molly is talking to Jim.  
 Molly: Don't move! There is a spider on your neck!

Without Molly noticing the spider, her intention of warning Jim would not come into being. When expressing intention in an utterance, the speaker also needs the necessary attention, so as to formulate the utterance in a comprehensible way. The frequency or familiarity of the intention, and especially of the linguistic expression in question, determines the extent of attentional processing. Greetings require less attentional resources and appear more automatic than do spider warnings, the latter being less frequent and also harder to process. When intention is interpreted by the hearer, the amount of attentional resources needed is similarly proportional to the resources required in formulating the intention. The person being greeted can easily comprehend the speaker's intention and respond to it in an effortless way. However, in example (7), Jim, when warned of the spider, may need to undertake some effort in order to read the intention and deploy the relevant reaction. Intention directs attention to relevant information resources so that the intention can be realized, and communication be conducted in a coherent and comprehensible way. By selecting those resources, intention becomes central to the processing of communication.

## 7.2 *Recipient Design and Saliency*

Current pragmatics theories consider communication as recipient design from the perspective of the speaker and intention recognition from the perspective of the hearer. According to the SCA, recipient design is paired with saliency in language production. *Recipient design is the result of cooperation, while saliency is the driving force behind egocentrism.* In order to succeed in recipient design, speakers must correctly express intended illocutionary acts by using appropriate words, and make their attempt in an adequate context. Speakers relate propositional contents to the world (actual situational context; audience) with the intention of establishing a correspondence between words and things from a certain direction of fit. While fitting

words into actual situational contexts, speakers are driven by not only the intent that the hearer recognize what is meant as intended by the speaker (social) but also by salience that affects production subconsciously (egocentrism). The following conversation from the movie “Angel Eyes” demonstrates how salience can affect the process of word selection.

(8)

Actual situational context: A policewoman in uniform is driving the car, and the man sitting beside her is staring at her.

PW: What...?

M: I was trying to picture you *without your clothes on*.

PW: Excuse me?

M: Oh no, I did not mean like that. I am trying to picture your *without your uniform*.

PW: Okaay?

M: I mean, on your day off, you know, *in regular clothes*.

The man makes three attempts to find the appropriate wording for why he was looking at the policewoman the way he did. There is a strong effect of perceptual salience on the selection of words (linguistic salience). As a result, the man has difficulties finding the acceptable words. There is an intuitive possibility of a distinction between what a speaker says and what he/she actually implicates. Salience motivated by prior experience, or what is on our mind (Giora 2003; Kecskes 2006), which operates subconsciously and automatically, may affect word selection and utterance formation. So on the one hand, we have the speaker with an intention to tell the woman why he was looking at her the way he did, and on the other hand, there is the subconscious salience that affected how he formulated his intention. The problem with those word selections is that some expressions and/or words create their own context. They direct the hearer to one particular implicature (in this case to the sexual one). This supports the idea about implicatures with different strengths. Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995) proposed a strength hierarchy for implicatures, claiming that strong implicatures are more determinate, and the addressees cannot but recover them (see example 8). In other words, they must be derived in order to make the speaker’s utterance relevant. At the same time, the speaker must take full responsibility for these implicatures. This is what causes problems for the speaker sometimes.

We could relate this phenomenon to what has been happening nowadays with language use in general. People may get into trouble because what is on their mind subconsciously may result in selecting semantically too powerful, socioculturally loaded words, expressions, or utterances that create their own context, leading to one particular implicature, and the actual situational context cannot cancel that implicature. Mitt Romney’s case during the 2012 presidential elections can demonstrate this issue very well. As a presidential candidate, Romney was speaking to a group of investors, and he uttered the following sentence: “I am not concerned about the very poor.” In that actual situation context, he wanted to say that the poor are usually taken care of in the USA because there are a great variety of programs helping them. However, the utterance was so powerful semantically with a strong sociocultural load that it made its own context, leading to one particular implica-

ture. What happened was that prior context, collective salience tied to that utterance (“not concerned about the poor”) overrode the effect of actual situational context. This leads us to the next issue that concerns the understanding of context.

### 7.3 *Prior Context and Actual Situational Context*

The SCA proposes to make a difference between prior context (encoded in lexical items that serve as triggers for particular meanings) and actual situational context (current moment of speech experience). It is argued in this view that what usually is called “context” in linguistics is in fact “actual situational context.”

In linguistics, “context” usually refers to any factor—linguistic, epistemic, physical, or social—that affects the actual interpretation of signs and expressions. Context dependency is one of the most powerful views in current linguistic and philosophical theory going back to Frege (1884/1980), Wittgenstein (1921/1922) and others. The context principle of Frege (1884/1980) asserts that a word has meaning only in the context of a sentence. Wittgenstein (1921/1922) basically formulated the same idea saying that an expression has meaning only in a proposition. Every variable can be conceived as a propositional variable. This *external perspective on context* holds that context modifies and/or specifies word meanings in one way or another. Context is seen as a selector of lexical features because it activates some of these features, while leaving others in the background.

According to Sperber and Wilson’s relevance theory (1986/1995), relevance is something that is not determined by context but constrained by context. A context-driven pragmatic process is generally top down. It is usually not triggered by an expression in the sentence, but occurs for purely pragmatic reasons: that is, in order to make sense of what the speaker says. Such processes are also referred to as “free” pragmatic processes. They are considered free because they are not mandated by the linguistic expressions but respond to pragmatic considerations only. For example, the pragmatic process through which an expression is given a nonliteral (e.g., a metaphorical or figurative) interpretation is context driven because we interpret the expression nonliterally in order to make sense of a given speech act, not because this is required by linguistic expressions. This argument makes sense in L1 communication. However, it seems to be problematic in intercultural interactions. *For nonnative speakers, prior context based on prior experience may have a stronger effect on meaning construction and comprehension than actual situational context when processing utterance meaning.* Interpretation generally depends on what the utterance says rather than on what it actually communicates. House (2002) and Kecskes (2007) found that the primary concern of nonnative speakers is the meaning of the uttered sentence and context is usually secondary. They heavily rely on literal meaning of expressions rather than on the selective role of actual situational context. The interaction below takes place between a clerk and a Korean student in the Office of Human resources.

(9)

Lee: Could you sign this document for me, please?

Clerk: *Come again.*

Lee: Why should I come again? I am here now.

The Korean student misunderstands the expression “come again.” He processes it literally, although the actual situational context is completely unresponsive to this interpretation. What the clerk referred to with “come again” is that she did not quite understand what the Korean student has said and wanted him to repeat it.

Research (cf. House 2002; Kecskes 2007, 2015) and the example above demonstrate that the *internalist perspective on context* is very relevant to intercultural communication. This perspective considers lexical units as creators of context (e.g., Gee 1999; Violi 2000). Violi (2000, p. 117) claimed that our experience is developed through the regularity of recurrent and similar situations which we tend to identify with given contexts. The standard (prior recurring) context can be defined as a regular situation that we have repeated experience with, and about which we have expectations as to what will or will not happen, and on which we rely to understand and predict how the world around us works. It is exactly these standard contexts that linguistic meanings tied to lexical units refer to. For instance:

(10)

Step out of the car, please.

Let me tell you something.

Do you want to talk about it?

These situation-bound utterances (Kecskes 2000; 2003) actually create their own contexts. Gumperz (1982, p. 138) said that utterances somehow carry with them their own context or project a context. Referring to Gumperz’s work, Levinson (2003) claims that the message versus context opposition is misleading because the message can carry with it or forecast the context. This refers to the double sidedness of the context as described in the SCA.

The main problem with the externalist and internalist views of context is that they are both one-sided because they emphasize either the selective or the constitutive role of context. However, the dynamic nature of human speech communication requires that we recognize both regularity and variability in meaning construction and comprehension, and take into account both the selective and constitutive roles of context at the same time. World knowledge is available to human beings in two forms: (1) as tied to lexical items and images based on prior encounters and experience and (2) as provided by the actual situational context framed by the given situation (Kecskes 2008, 2010). Context represents two sides of world knowledge: *prior context and actual situational context*, which are intertwined and inseparable. Actual situational context is viewed through prior context, and this combination creates, as it were, a third space. Meaning is, in this view, seen as the outcome of the interrelation and interaction of prior context and actual situational context. Why is this important? It is because when current pragmatic theories speak about context, what is actually meant is actual situational context. Prior context seems to be ignored. Intercultural pragmatics emphasizes the symbiosis of the prior and the actual. There is no doubt about the fact that actual situational context usually has a



decisive role in determining meaning in L1 communication. However, intercultural interactions show a different picture. In fact, *prior, reoccurring context may cancel the selective role of actual situational context in L1 communication as well*. We can demonstrate this through an example taken from Culpeper (2009).

(11)

Example 3: Creative deviation from the default context (cf. “mock impoliteness”)

[Lawrence Dallaglio, former England Rugby captain, describing the very close family he grew up in]

“As Francesca and John left the house, she came back to give Mum a kiss and they said goodbye in the way they often did. “Bye, you bitch,” Francesca said. “Get out of here, go on, you bitch,” replied Mum. (It’s in the Blood: My life, 2007)”. (Culpeper 2009)

Culpeper explained that the reason why the conversation between the mother and daughter does not hurt either of them is due to the context (“mock impoliteness”). However, a closer look at the example reveals that actual situational context does hardly play any role here. What we have here is the strong effect of prior context—prior experience that overrides actual situational context: “...they said goodbye in the way they often did.” Reoccurring context, frequent use may neutralize the impolite conceptual load attached to expressions. This is exactly what happens here.

Prior context is especially well manifested in formulaic language that is mainly the result of prior reoccurring contexts.

## 7.4 *Formulaic Language*

By formulaic language, we usually mean multiword collocations which are stored and retrieved holistically rather than being generated *de novo* with each use. Collocations, fixed semantic units, frozen metaphors, phrasal verbs, speech formulas, idioms, and situation-bound utterances can all be considered as examples of formulaic language (Howarth 1998; Wray 1999, 2002, 2005; Kecskes 2000). These word strings occurring together tend to convey holistic meanings that are either more than the sum of the individual parts or diverge significantly from a literal, or word-for-word meaning and operate as a single semantic unit (Gairns and Redman 1986, p. 35).

Formulaic language is not among the favorite topics of Gricean pragmatics. The explanation is quite simple. Formulaic language just does not fit into the “what is said—what is communicated” modular view. The leading thought in the present-day linguistic research on meaning is that linguistic stimuli are just a guide or trigger in the performing of inferences about each other’s states of minds and intentions. Formulaic expressions do not fit very well into this line of thinking because they usually have fixed meanings that are usually not actual situational context sensitive. They are like frozen implicatures. When situation-bound utterances such as *Nice meeting you; You’re all set; How do you do?* are used, there is usually just one way to understand their situational function. Intercultural pragmatics cannot ignore formulaic language because formulaic language use proves more than anything else that there is a difference between intracultural and intercultural communication. Why is that so?

Formulaic language is the heart and soul of native-like language use. Formulaic expressions are essential parts of pragmatic competence, reflections of native-like behavior, and often express cultural values, social expectations, and speaker attitude. Coulmas (1981, p. 1) argued that much of what is actually said in everyday conversation is by no means unique. “Rather, a great deal of communicative activity consists of enacting routines making use of prefabricated linguistic units in a well-known and generally accepted manner”. He continued claiming that “successful coordination of social intercourse heavily depends on standardized ways of organizing interpersonal encounters” (Coulmas 1981, p. 3). Hymes (1962) pointed out that an immense portion of verbal behavior consists of linguistic routines. Bolinger suggested that “speakers do at least as much remembering as they do putting together” (Bolinger 1976, p. 2). Fillmore also found that “an enormously large amount of natural language is formulaic, automatic, and rehearsed, rather than propositional, creative, or freely generated” (Fillmore 1976, p. 24). The ability to sound idiomatic (achieving “native-like selection,” in the words of Pawley and Syder 1983) plays a very important role in language production and comprehension. As stated above, formulaic language is the result of conventionalization and standardization which is supported by regular use of certain lexical units for particular purposes in a speech community. This is usually what nonnative speakers have limited access to in the target language. People using a particular language and belonging to a particular speech community have *preferred ways of saying things* (cf. Wray 2002) and *preferred ways of organizing thoughts* (Kecskes 2007, 2013b). Preferred ways of saying things are generally reflected in the use of formulaic language and figurative language, while preferred ways of organizing thoughts can be detected through analyzing, for instance, the use of subordinate conjunctions, clauses, and discourse markers. Selecting the right words and expressions, and formulating utterances in ways preferred by speakers of a language community (“native-like selection”) is more important than syntax. The following example demonstrates this clearly:

(12)

A sign in an Austrian hotel catering to skiers (source: Octopus, October 1995, Champaign, IL, p. 144):

“Not to perambulate the corridors in the hours of repose in the boots of descension.”

Correctly: “Don’t walk in the halls in ski boots at night.”

The sentence shows absolutely bad word choices but acceptable syntax.

Although formulaic language has been mostly overlooked for years in favor of models of language that center around the rule-governed, systematic nature of language and its use, the climate has been changing as a result of corpus linguistics and corpus-based studies. There is growing evidence that these prefabricated lexical units are integral to first- and second-language acquisition and use, as they are segmented from input and stored as wholes in long-term memory (Wood 2002; Wray 2002; Miller and Weinert 1998). Formulaic expressions are basic to fluent language production. *Combining prefabricated units with novel items (newly generated items) to express communicative intention and goals is what makes language use really creative and native like.* So we need to ask the question: “Do nonnative speakers participating in intercultural communication exercise this type of creativ-

ity?” With no native speakers participating in the language game, “How much will the players stick to the original rules of the game?”

I thought that the best way to answer these questions is to investigate the use of formulaic expressions that are the reflections of a native likeness best defined as knowing preferred ways of saying things and organizing thoughts in a language. I conducted two studies based on two different corpora to answer the questions: the first one in 2007 (“Formulaic language use in English Lingua Franca”) and the second one in 2013 (“Is the ‘idiom principle’ blocked in bilingual L2 production?”; Kecskes 2015). The main conclusion in both studies was the same. Nonnative speakers when participating in lingua franca communication prefer the use of semantically more transparent language to formulaic language so as to make sure that they will be understood by all participants in the interaction. The use of formulaic language was under 10% in both studies. This is not what Coulmas (1981); Fillmore (1982); Pawley and Syder 1983; Wray (2002); and others speak about referring to L1 communication. So I think, this is where the real difference exists between intracultural and intercultural communication. Speech communities develop conventional ways of saying things in recurring situations. The main reason is that there is psycholinguistic evidence that fixed expressions and formulas have an important economizing role in speech production (cf. Miller and Weinert 1998; Wray 2002). Sinclair’s (1991) *idiom principle* says that the use of prefabricated chunks may ...*illustrate a natural tendency to economy of effort* (p. 110). Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995) also speak about the economy principle in their relevance theory. In communication, we want to achieve more cognitive effects with less processing effort. Formulaic expressions ease the processing overload not only because they are *ready-made* and do not require of the speaker/hearer any *putting together* but also because their salient meanings are easily accessible in online production and processing. But this is not the case in intercultural communication where the speakers represent different L1s and use L2 (or Lx) to communicate with each other. So the language game changes because the players do not necessarily stick to the original rules of the game. For nonnative speakers, literal meaning has priority. Inferred meaning usually coincides with literal meaning.

Talking about L1 communication, Berg (1993, p. 410) argued that: “What we understand from an utterance could never be just the literal meaning of the sentence uttered.” Although actual communicative behavior of native speakers in many cases points to the fact that Berg may be right, we will need to reject this assumption in intercultural communication. Examples from the ELF database (Kecskes 2007, 2015) demonstrate that literality plays a powerful role for ELF speakers.

Bach (2007, p. 5) said that (actual situational) context does not literally determine, in the sense of constituting, what the speaker means. What the speaker really means is a matter of his communicative intention, although what he could reasonably mean depends on what information is mutually salient. Bach further argued that taking mutually salient information into account goes beyond semantics, for what a speaker means need not be the same as what the uttered sentence means. This claim raises an important question from the perspective of lingua franca speakers. What is the “mutually salient information” for lingua franca speakers, people participating in intercultural interactions? Salience is based on familiarity, frequency, and common prior experience (Giora 1997, 2003). Mutually salient information (unless it is connected

with the ongoing speech situation when ELF speakers create their own formulas) is something ELF speakers lack because they speak several different L1s and represent different cultures. For them, mutually salient information should be directly connected with the actual situational context, tied to some universal knowledge, and/or encoded in the common linguistic code (lingua franca) so that it can be “extracted” by the hearer without any particular inference that relies on nonexistent common prior experience. *Inferencing for the lingua franca hearer in intercultural interaction usually means something close to decoding*. It is essential therefore that pragmatics for lingua franca interlocutors cannot be something “...they communicate over and above the semantic content of the sentence” as King and Stanley (2005, p. 117) assumed. For lingua franca speakers, the semantic content is usually the conveyed content. If this is not clear from their utterance, they try to reinforce it with repetition, paraphrasing, or other means. So for nonnative speakers (especially with lower language proficiency) participating in intercultural interactions, pragmatics is very close to semantics. In L1 communication, “what is said” rarely coincides with “what is communicated.” This is why Gricean pragmatics gives such an importance to implicatures. “Speakers implicate, hearers infer” (Horn 2004, p. 6). However, in intercultural communication what the speaker says is usually what he/she means. The meaning of the sentence is meant literally. This fact gives a strong support to Bach’s (2007, p. 5) claim, cited above.

However, the same is not quite true for native speakers, at least based on what Bach said: “...it is a mistake to suppose that ‘pragmatic content is what the speaker communicates over and above the semantic content of the sentence’ (King and Stanley 2005, p. 117). Pragmatics doesn’t just fill the gap between semantic and conveyed content. It operates even when there is no gap. So it is misleading to speak of the border or, the so-called interface between semantics and pragmatics. This mistakenly suggests that pragmatics somehow takes over when semantics leaves off. It is one thing for a sentence to have the content that it has and another thing for a speech act of uttering the sentence to have the content it has. Even when the content of the speech act is the same as that of the sentence, that is a pragmatic fact, something that the speaker has to intend and the hearer has to figure out” (Bach 2007, p. 5).

In intercultural communication, the content of the speech act is usually the same as that of the sentence. That is a pragmatic fact, as Bach says, something that the speaker intends to say and the hearer has to figure out. In L1 communication on which current pragmatic theories are built, there is much more of a gap between what is said and what is meant than in lingua franca communication in which it is of utmost importance that the speaker should mean close to what he/she says; otherwise the hearer may have difficulty to figure out the speaker’s intention because of limited core common ground, shared knowledge, and mutual norms.

## 8 Conclusion

As defined above, intercultural pragmatics is about how a language system is put to use in intercultural encounters in which conventions and norms of communality do not have that strong an effect on production and comprehension as is the case

in intracultural interactions, because they need to be co-constructed usually from scratch. Consequently, there seems to be a shift of emphasis from the social to the individual, both being equally important though.

So far, when we have talked about language and language use, we have taken for granted that there are some universal principles of human communication that are lexicalized and grammaticalized differently in different languages because of different needs of people speaking those languages. However, we have paid less attention to communicative encounters where participants with different L1s come to use an L2 as the means of communication. Will that change anything in our thinking about how interactions take place and meaning is shaped? This chapter has tried to contribute to answering this question.

Language is all about conventions. It is a set of rules, a set of social conventions that have developed in a particular way in a particular speech community (society) in response to the communicative need of its members. These conventions and their varieties become habits of the individual speakers of the language. Each speech community (society) creates its own sets of linguistic and nonlinguistic conventions that are unique to that group of people. Each human language should be considered a unique entity reflecting a unique society. If we accept this view, which most linguists do, it is essential that the set of linguistic conventions must be the reflection of the set of nonlinguistic conventions in that speech community, at least to some extent. So communicating within that set of nonlinguistic conventions (that we might as well call “culture”), the linguistic signs can be used economically because people in the given speech community are familiar with the set of nonlinguistic conventions that constitute the frame of interactions. This is why present-day linguistics is all about context sensitivity and the underdeterminacy of linguistic signs. However, when people communicate in a language other than their L1, this harmonious interplay between the set of linguistic conventions and set of nonlinguistic conventions seems to be lost to some extent. In intercultural interactions, especially in lingua franca communication, the participants have to work with not only a different set of linguistic conventions but also a different set of nonlinguistic conventions. So both sets are alien. How will this affect language use? To answer this question, this chapter has focused on issues that crop up when the nature of intercultural interactions is examined.

The main goal of this chapter is to explain what intercultural communication is all about, and direct attention to some tenets of pragmatics that may need some modification if we broaden the scope of pragmatics research to incorporate the new developments in speech communication. It should be emphasized that the issues that were addressed do not give us a full picture. Further research is needed to investigate the nature of intercultural interactions and their impact on how we understand pragmatics.

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# Critical Discourse Analysis: Definition, Approaches, Relation to Pragmatics, Critique, and Trends

Linda R. Waugh, Theresa Catalano, Khaled Al Masaeed,  
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**Abstract** This chapter introduces the transdisciplinary research movement of critical discourse analysis (CDA) beginning with its definition and recent examples of CDA work. In addition, approaches to CDA such as the dialectical relational (Fairclough), socio-cognitive (van Dijk), discourse historical (Wodak), social actors (van Leeuwen), and Foucauldian dispositive analysis (Jäger and Maier) are outlined, as well as the complex relation of CDA to pragmatics. Next, the chapter provides a brief mention of the extensive critique of CDA, the creation of critical discourse studies (CDS), and new trends in CDA, including positive discourse analysis (PDA), CDA with multimodality, CDA and cognitive linguistics, critical applied linguistics, and other areas (rhetoric, education, anthropology/ethnography, sociolinguistics, culture, feminism/gender, and corpus studies). It ends with new directions aiming towards social action for social justice.

**Keywords** Critical discourse analysis · Critical discourse studies · Critical approaches · (Socio)pragmatics

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# 1 Critical Discourse Analysis

## 1.1 General Definition

Critical discourse analysis (CDA)<sup>1</sup> is a “problem-oriented interdisciplinary research movement, subsuming a variety of approaches, each with different theoretical models, research methods and agenda” (Fairclough et al. 2011, p. 357). It can best be described as a loosely networked group of scholars that began in the 1980s in Great Britain and Western Europe and has since burgeoned into an international set of approaches that explores the connections/relationships between language use, its producers and consumers, and the social and political contexts, structures, and practices in which it occurs. By studying discourse, it emphasizes the way in which language is implicated in issues such as power and ideology that determine how language is used, what effect it has, and how it reflects, serves, and furthers the interests, positions, perspectives, and values of, those who are in power. From a CDA point of view, discourse perpetuates social patterns like domination, discrimination, exploitation, dehumanization, naturalization, (ideologically driven) “common sense,” unless its usually hidden effects are exposed so that awareness, resistance, emancipation, and social action can bring about social change and social justice. Thus, CDA typically is “normative,” in that it judges what is right and what is wrong and “addresses social wrongs in their discursive aspects and possible ways of righting or mitigating them” (Fairclough 2010b, p. 11).

As we will see, many of the statements in this preceding section are highly contested, not only by those who have sometimes very strong critiques of CDA but also by those who practice it. There are many different approaches to CDA and not all adherents of those approaches recognize their affinity with each other. Some prefer the terms critical discourse studies (CDS) and discourse studies (DS), and others have founded positive discourse analysis (PDA)—all of which have also attracted scholars who never did CDA themselves. There are also those who argue against the centering of language (discourse, text) in CDA and have brought in semiotic and multimodal approaches. These, and other, differences will be discussed in Sects. 4, 5, and 6.

In principle, CDA can be used for any type of topic, in any type of discourse, in any type of medium (discourse modality), using a variety of types of methodology—although a given CDA analyst or group of analysts will prefer/focus on one of these categories, according to their own predilections. With these provisos in mind, we can say that many of the topics that CDA takes up include the unjust or biased treatment of people based on differences (e.g., religion, race, sex, nationality/citizenship status, and stereotyping); the relationship between language, ideol-

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ogy, power, and social change; and the related use of language by groups (e.g., Wall Street chief executive officers, CEOs, corporations, Mafia, politicians, government) to gain power, stay in power, or oppress minority groups; as well as globalization, nationalism, language planning/policy, and pedagogy, including the analysis of teaching materials and policy documents. These are treated in a wide variety of discourse contexts including media discourse of all types (e.g. film, newspapers, TV news broadcasts, internet, email), as well as elite, literary, narrative, government, advertising, educational, legal/courtroom, medical, cross-/inter-/transcultural, parental/family discourses, and conversational interaction. The discourse modalities studied are equally wide: e.g., written texts, monomodal and multimodal texts, visual, oral/aural/spoken, musical, natural/mechanical, etc.—although the majority of work in CDA is on linguistic and visual modalities.

## 1.2 *Three Recent Examples of CDA*

In order to grasp more concretely what CDA is and does, it is useful to give a few brief examples. While these recent examples in no way represent all approaches to CDA (and will just provide a quick glance at how CDA works and how different each approach and focus can be), they should aid in understanding the CDA process and its use and need in society.

In the first example by Every (2013), the author aims the study at advocates and activists working to change negative responses to asylum seekers in Australia (and globally) which could result in positive life changes for them. Through analysis of letters to the editor, online comments, and media articles on the relocation of asylum seekers to a small town in South Australia, the author explores the advocacy strategy of “shaming,” identifying two types of shaming techniques: expressions of contempt and disgust (e.g., “hysterical group of rabble-rousers” (p. 679)) and a comparison of privilege and oppression (e.g., “We as a nation do not realise how lucky we are to have all the freedoms we enjoy, and that so many others do not” (p. 677)). After analyzing the responses to this shaming, the author concludes that these techniques produce denial, avoidance, and escalating conflict (strengthening instead of weakening the opposition), rather than the desired effect of social change. As a result, the author suggests that advocates target value systems instead. This study is an excellent example of the use of CDA to promote social justice and change, and how concrete actions (such as dropping the shaming strategy and applying new strategies) can come out of such research.

A different approach to CDA can be seen in Kim’s (2014) article which focuses on the way in which North Korea is constructed in the US media using a corpus-based approach that analyzes collocational patterns (how frequently certain words appear in the corpus under a specific search term, in this case, North Korea). The collocation analysis was divided into two categories: (1) countries that could reasonably be expected to appear as strong collocates of North Korea, such as China, the USA, South Korea, Russia and Japan (due to the political and social landscapes involved); and (2) countries that would not normally be expected to appear as

collocates of North Korea (because they are not connected to North Korea historically, geographically, culturally, or politically). Analysis of concordances (words that appear in the vicinity of the search word) revealed patterns in which common phrases where the country collocates appeared (Iran was surprisingly the most common collocate with North Korea) were that of “rogue state like North Korea,” “countries like North Korea,” “states like these and their terrorist...” and “nation like North Korea” (taken from different news sources). Findings demonstrated that the US media “divide the world into specific sets of countries, based on those countries’ political position towards the USA rather than on any geographical or historical relations among the countries themselves” (Kim 2014, p. 240). In this media division, North Korea and Iran as well as other countries were framed as “others” in the context of various crises and conflicts. The significance of the study lies in the way the analysis of a large corpus reveals patterns that show how privileged groups that dominate society frame issues and often mislead readers.

Finally, in Catalano and Waugh (2013b), the authors examine how metonymy is used to represent powerful groups (e.g., CEOs) versus powerless ones (e.g., Latino migrants) in US online newspaper crime reports. In this multimodal analysis, images and text were analyzed separately as well as in interaction that revealed exactly how CEOs, despite serious crimes that resulted in great social harm (e.g., people losing all of their money), were, nevertheless, represented positively through images that ranged from smiling grandfatherly offenders wearing suits to massive, expensive buildings shown in upward camera angles metonymically symbolizing the powerful organizations working inside. Verbally, the analysis also revealed the use of metonymies to produce vague and simplified ideas of what the crime actually was (e.g., “this whole thing” (p. 411)), unnecessary information (in the context of reporting a crime) that presented the CEOs positively (e.g., “long-standing leader,” “unblemished record” (p. 412)) and the highlighting of family relationships and bonds, among other strategies. These findings prove to be even more significant when compared with media discourse in crime reports where Latino migrants in the USA were accused of crimes. In these reports, not only were the abovementioned strategies not present but different strategies were also used in image (e.g., unflattering mug shots that index an arrest) and text (e.g., bringing up the offender’s immigration status and linking it to the crime, repetition of the violent nature of alleged crimes (e.g., “sexual assault”—where “sexual” is mentioned four times), and dehumanization and depersonalization (e.g., “illegals,” “aliens,” “processed for removal” (p. 419)). The study not only demonstrates the ideological potential of metonymy but also illustrates how focusing attention on both verbal and visual details can provide valuable insights into media discourse.

Having given these examples of very recent work in CDA, we now turn to a discussion of the most common approaches to CDA which are associated with both familiar and newly emerging scholars.

## 2 Common Approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis

There are five common approaches to CDA that we will discuss in this section, which have a number of characteristics in common. For example, they are problem/issue oriented, interdisciplinary and eclectic, and they all share an interest in demystifying ideologies and power through the systematic investigation of semiotic data (e.g., written, spoken, or visual modes; Wodak and Meyer 2009b). They also share (Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Wodak and Meyer 2009b; see also Paltridge 2012) the belief that social and political issues are constructed and reflected in discourse (Paltridge 2012, p. 187), power relations are negotiated and performed through discourse (p. 188), discourse both reflects and reproduces social relations (p. 189), ideologies are produced and reflected in the use of discourse (p. 190), discourse has a very important historical dimension (Wodak and Meyer 2009a, b), and discourse is a form of social practice and action. According to Blackledge, “Social life can be seen as networks of diverse social practices, including economic, political, cultural, familial practices, and so on. Social practices are more or less stable forms of social activity, which always, or almost always, include discourse” (2011, p. 617; see also Fairclough et al. 2011, p. 357). Given this, most kinds of CDA seek to “demystify discourses by deciphering ideologies” (Wodak 2009) and to ask questions about the way specific discourse properties are deployed in the reproduction of social dominance. It also attempts to define whose interests are being represented, e.g., which social actors, groups, or institutions have the power to convince, harm, dominate, or control others and to what ends. Their social power is seen as a source of control, a power base of privileged access to scarce social resources, such as force, money, status, fame, knowledge, information, language, and specific forms of discourse, including especially public discourse; integration in laws, rules, norms, habits, and consensus; and access to ways to instill beliefs about the world through discourse and communication.

Despite these commonalities, the CDA “research program” varies considerably according to scientific methodology, theoretical influence, and “ability to ‘translate’ their theoretical claims into instruments and methods of analysis” (Wodak and Meyer 2009b, p. 23). Below, we have attempted to give a brief introduction to the most common/best-known approaches to CDA that are frequently cited in the CDA literature. We outline their origins, associated scholars and research focus, as well as central concepts/distinguishing features. And we also give their definition of “discourse” since it varies from one approach to another. While we do not claim that these are the only approaches to CDA, we do argue that they are the best established, and we later mention briefly more recent (or lesser known) trends in Sects. 5 and 6. It is also worth noting that some of these approaches have different names, depending on who is using them and when, but we will adapt those used in Wodak and Meyer (2009a), which is highly cited in this regard and which has the virtue of including not only the Introduction by Wodak and Meyer (2009b), but also chapters written by those who are the leading figures of each of the best-known approaches.

## 2.1 *Dialectical–Relational Approach (DRA), Norman Fairclough*

Fairclough is one of the key figures in the realm of CDA; his *Language and Power* (1989) book is commonly considered the (sole-authored) pioneering publication for the genesis of CDA; he has been very prolific and has continued to publish in this realm since that time, although the terminology he used at first changed a few times (e.g., critical language study, critical language awareness); the ways in which he has characterized his particular way of doing CDA have also evolved over the course of his career; and he has been very active in reading social theory and bringing new ideas from that realm to CDA. One measure of his maturation is a comparison of his 1995 book, *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*, first edition (1995a), with his 2010 book of the same title, second edition (2010a). The former is a collection of ten papers written between 1983 and 1992, grouped into four sections: language, ideology, and power; discourse and sociocultural change; textual analysis in social research; and critical language awareness. In the second edition, there are 23 papers (six from the original edition) from 1983 to 2008, for which he kept, with some renaming in certain cases, three of the original sections and added four others: language, ideology and power; discourse and sociocultural change; dialectics of discourse: theoretical developments; methodology in CDA research; political discourse; globalisation and “transition”; and language and education (which was called critical language awareness in the first edition). The four new sections are a reflection of the ways in which his work developed between 1995 and 2010. In the general introduction (2010b) to the second edition, he states that his broad objective of work in CDA had remained the same: “to develop ways of analysing language which address its involvement in the workings of contemporary capitalist societies” (p. 1). The development of his dialectical–relational approach to CDA (in which he analyzes the dialectical relationships between and within discourse structures and between discourse and other elements of social life), which is the way in which he positions himself in his contribution (2009) to the Wodak and Meyer (2009a) book, is associated with his later work, some of it written with Chouliaraki: Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), Fairclough (1999, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2010b, 2012), in which he calls his approach “realist” and “dialectical–relational”.

For Fairclough (2009, pp. 162–163), “discourse” has two interlocking senses: (1) “the language associated with a particular social field or practice (e.g., ‘political discourse’),” and (2) “a way of construing aspects of the world associated with a particular social perspective (e.g., a ‘neo-liberal discourse of globalization’).” He uses the term ‘semiosis’ (Fairclough et al. 2004b) in the sense of meaning-making which “frames social interaction and contributes to the construction of social relations” (p. 219). But he also insists that elements such as social relations, power, institutions, etc., are in part semiotic, not purely semiotic, and thus opens up the question about the “relations as articulations between semiotic and non-semiotic elements...and between semiotic elements” (Fairclough 2010c, p. 164). He characterizes his work as “transdisciplinary” in the sense that it combines elements of three disciplines: In the case of his recent work, on the “cultural political economy,”

for example, he draws on economic analysis, a theory of the state, and CDA. “Discourses” (vs. “discourse”) “are semiotic ways of construing aspects of the world (physical, social, or mental) which can be generally identified with different positions or perspectives of different groups of social actors” (Fairclough 2009, p. 164). And “orders of discourse” (Fairclough 1992b—configurations of different genres, discourses and styles) are “the semiotic dimension of (networks of) social practices which constitute social fields, institutions, organizations, etc.” (Fairclough 2009, p. 164; see also Foucault 1972). He reserves the term “text” for the semiotic dimension of events; it encompasses written, conversational, interviews, and multimodal texts<sup>2</sup>.

According to Wodak and Meyer (2009b, p. 27), in the dialectical–relational approach, Fairclough

focuses upon social conflict in the Marxian tradition and tries to detect its linguistic manifestations in discourse, in specific elements of dominance, difference and resistance.... He understands CDA as the analysis of the dialectical relationships between semiosis (including language) and other elements of social practice.... His approach to CDA oscillates between a focus on structure and a focus on action.

According to Fairclough, the value of the dialectical–relational approach lies in its ability to make sense of data from different perspectives in order to come up with a more powerful research approach (2009). Moreover, dialectical–relational analysis allows people to see through the “complex dialectical relations between semiotic and non-semiotic elements which constitute the social, political and economic conditions of their lives”—something most people are not capable of doing (2009, p. 183). Drawing on the work of Harvey (1996), Fairclough argues for theoretical diversity through incorporating the macro-level of social structure and the micro-level of social action. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, p. 16) posit the following:

We see CDA as bringing a variety of theories into dialogue, especially social theories on the one hand and linguistic theories on the other, so that its theory is a shifting synthesis of other theories, though what it itself theorises in particular is the mediation between the social and the linguistic—the “order of discourse,” the social structuring of semiotic hybridity (interdiscursivity).

In fact, the dialectical–relational approach to CDA refuses to be limited to specific fields or methodologies and, therefore, Fairclough et al. (2011) posit that this approach “has explored the discursive aspect of contemporary processes of social transformation...[through a] commitment to transdisciplinarity—whereby the logic and categories of different disciplines are brought together into dialogue with one another” (p. 362).

Fairclough (2009) characterizes the dialectical–relational approach as occurring in four stages: (1) focus on a social wrong, with special attention to dialectical relations between semiotic and other “moments”, (2) identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong, (3) consider whether the social order needs the social wrong, and (4) identify possible ways past the obstacles (pp. 167–171). He describes the

<sup>2</sup> In much of his work, Fairclough has insisted upon his “text orientation,” that is, a focus on particular authentic texts.

core analytical categories of this approach as being semiosis (and other social elements), discourse/style/genre, order of discourse (and social practices), text (and social event), interdiscursivity (and interdiscursive analysis), recontextualization, and operationalization (enactment, inculcation, materialization; p. 171). An excellent example of Fairclough's dialectical-relational approach (included in his 2009 paper, see also Fairclough 2000) can be seen in his political discourse analysis of the foreword to a government document written by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and a critique of Blair's "New Labour" government by two former members of the Labour Party. Fairclough begins with a summary of the contemporary political condition (with a detailed description of the role of globalization) and then shows how the texts construe relations between the companies and national governments, and the contrast between what is, and what should be, construed in relations between the EU and national governments, demonstrating the dialectical nature of these relations and placing the focus on semiosis. He then explains (Fairclough 2009, p. 182) how the first text "depoliticises by construing a consensus on the global economy as an inevitable fact of life and building national competitiveness as a necessary response" whereas the second text "politicises by construing the globalised economy as a stake in struggles between governments and transnationals, and capital and labour, and by opposing that construal to the government's consensualist construal."

Fairclough's approach has been criticized for spending too much time on depoliticization and not enough on politicization (which he justifies as a known bias stemming from his involvement in left-wing politics of the 1970s), and while he does not agree that this is a limitation, he does admit that more cognitively oriented research on discourse could be complementary to the dialectical-relational approach (Fairclough 2009, p. 183). Some other work by Fairclough using this approach includes his writings on the discourse of New Labour (2000, 2003, which supplies many examples of applications of this approach), his (2006) book on the politically powerful concepts of globalization, and various chapters in (2010b), described above.

Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) is a presentation of a new approach to the analysis of political discourse as a contribution to the development of CDA, different in certain ways from the political discourse analysis of Chilton (2004, 2010), and Wodak's DHA (Wodak 2001a, b, 2009; Wodak and de Cillia 2006; Reisigl and Wodak 2009), discussed below. What is new is "that it views political discourse as primarily a form of argumentation...*practical* argumentation, argumentation for or against particular ways of acting, argumentation that can ground decision" (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, p. 1). The book includes a framework, a method, for analyzing, and evaluating, political discourse from this point of view, using many examples stemming from the financial crisis (2007–2011). Since it is meant to be a textbook for advanced students, one of its objectives is pedagogical and methodological, "to provide a new and better method that can be replicated in the analysis of different sets of data" (p. 13).



## 2.2 *Socio-Cognitive Approach of Teun van Dijk*

Teun van<sup>3</sup> Dijk is recognized as one of the early, prolific, and leading practitioners of CDA. His socio-cognitive approach (SCA; see van Dijk 2009b, to appear-c), emphasizes the “fundamental importance of the study of *cognition* (and not only that of society) in the critical analysis of discourse, communication and interaction” (van Dijk 2009b, p. 64) and “the fascinating sociocognitive interface of discourse, that is, the relations between mind, discursive interaction and society” (van Dijk 2009b, p. 65). It thus represents the sociopsychological dimension of CDA<sup>4</sup>, and draws on social representation theory (Moscovici 2000), which refers to the “bulk of concepts, opinions, attitudes, evaluations, images and explanations which result from daily life and are sustained by communication” (Wodak and Meyer 2009b, p. 25). In this approach, discourse is a multidimensional social phenomenon which is a linguistic object, an action, a form of social interaction, a social practice, a mental representation, an interactional or communicative event or activity, a cultural product, or even an economic commodity that can be bought and sold (van Dijk 2009b, pp. 66–67). Linguistics is understood in a “broad structural–functional sense” (Wodak and Meyer 2009b, p. 25), not just as the systemic functional linguistics (SFL), which many of those who come from the UK or Australia use in doing CDA, and of which van Dijk is quite critical (see 2008).

The concept of social cognitions is central to van Dijk’s approach, and can be defined as socially shared representations of societal groups and relations, as well as mental processes such as interpretation, thinking and arguing, making inferences, and learning that form a core element of the individual’s social identity (van Dijk 1993a; Meyer 2001). “These socially shared perceptions form the link between the social system and the individual cognitive system... and are shared among members of the same social group” (Wodak and Meyer 2009b, p. 26). According to van Dijk (see Wodak 2011b, p. 60), cognition provides this “missing link” and can show “how societal structures influence discourse structures” and how they are then “instituted, legitimated, confirmed or challenged by text or talk.” Thus, control of the public mind is accomplished through this linking of discourse to social cognitions, and social cognitions also explain the production as well as the understanding of discourse. Social representations are relevant in the context of knowledge (personal, group, culture), attitudes, and ideologies (Wodak and Meyer 2009b, p. 26), and the

<sup>3</sup> The issue of whether a family name beginning with “van” should be written with a lower case “v” or an upper case “V” is a difficult one. Van Dijk uses V on his website; however, in many citations of his work, “v” is used, and his name is alphabetized under “v.” We will use the latter spelling (unless Van is the first word in a sentence) and alphabetization; the same is true of other names, such as van Leeuwen.

<sup>4</sup> We will use CDA in our discussion, even though van Dijk prefers ‘critical discourse studies’, since he feels that the latter is, for him, a more general term than CDA, covering critical *analysis*, critical *theory*, and critical *applications*. It also aligns with the term ‘discourse studies’, rather than ‘discourse analysis’, since he views discourse studies as a multidisciplinary field that is not limited to *analysis* or to any particular type or method of analysis. Indeed, for him “CDS is not a method, but rather a critical *perspective*, *position* or *attitude*” (van Dijk 2009b, p. 62).

exercise of power involves the influence of knowledge, beliefs, values, plans, attitudes, ideologies, norms, and values, all of which are part of social cognition.

Van Dijk also describes how discursive units larger than the sentence are linked to the generation of prejudice and discrimination. This is accomplished by incorporating the idea of context models, which are mental representations of the parts of the communicative situation that are salient to the participant (Wodak and Meyer 2009b, p. 26). They control much of discourse production and understanding, such as genre, topic choice, local meanings, and coherence, along with speech acts, rhetoric, and style (van Dijk 2001b, p. 109), and they represent models of events language users refer to in the discourse as well as “dynamic pragmatic models of (each moment of) the very communicative event in which they participate themselves” (van Dijk 2012b, p. 589). Context models allow language users to adapt their discourse to the communicative situation in which they find themselves, and “since at least the time, the knowledge and the intentions of the context model change permanently during discourse processing (production, comprehension), context models are fundamentally dynamic” (ibid.). Context models control the “pragmatic” part of discourse and work to manage knowledge in interaction (Wodak and Meyer 2009b, p. 26). In this sense, language users adapt their discourse to the assumed knowledge of the other participants, recognizing the intentions of other speakers/social actors (Tomasello 2008). Groups in power affect discourse through the social representations shared by those groups. Thus, when looking at discourse, SCA can help us bridge the gap between the micro-level (language use, discourse, verbal interaction, and communication) and the macro-level (power, dominance, and inequality between social groups) of society, and is thus particularly useful in uncovering hidden ideologies embedded in the discourse.

Throughout his work in CDA, van Dijk has focused on the (re)production of racism in discourse and communication (see recently 2012a, 2014a; see Wodak 2011, p. 60). He has also examined more general questions of power abuse and the reproduction of inequality through ideologies, integrating elements from his earlier studies on cognition that found that those who control the most dimensions of discourse (i.e., topics, style, setting) have the most power (see Wodak 2011b, p. 60). He has also written extensively on ideology, in particular, in a book in 1998, in which he wrote “ideologies may be very succinctly defined as the *basis of the social representations shared by members of a group*” (p. 8), e.g., ways of organizing good versus bad, right versus wrong, true versus false. In a forthcoming chapter (van Dijk to appear, 2014b), he will propose a new, multidisciplinary theory of ideology based on the reformulation and integration of three central concepts: (1) the status, internal organization and mental functions of ideologies in terms of social cognition; (2) social, political, cultural, and historical conditions and functions of ideologies; and (3) the formation, changes, and reproduction of ideologies through socially situated discourse and communication. His view of ideology is thus different from that of other CD analysts.

Van Dijk has also turned his focus to the study of context (2001c, 2008, 2009a), arguing that there has been ample interest in context and contextualization in CDA, but little research on the details and theory of context, which he defines as dynamic

representations of the ongoing communicative event (van Dijk 2009a, b, pp. 73–75; Wodak 2011b, p. 61). Van Dijk’s latest work investigates the role of knowledge in discourse (2012b, c, d, to appear, 2014c), another area that he feels is under-represented in the literature, and summarizes a theory of “natural” knowledge and its relevance for the study of text and talk, as well as a basis for his work on social cognition and discourse (to appear, 2014b).

A few recent examples of other CDA work incorporating van Dijk’s socio-cognitive approach (or the socio-cognitive approach in combination with other approaches) include Isbuga-Erel (2008), Olausson (2009), Foluke (2011), Clarke et al. (2012), and Peyroux (2012).

### 2.3 *Discourse-Historical Approach of Ruth Wodak*

Ruth Wodak is also recognized as one of the major founding figures of CDA still active in the general enterprise, and she is largely associated with the discourse-historical approach (DHA). The term DHA was first used in Ruth Wodak’s study of post-war Austria, which traced the construction of an anti-Semitic stereotyped image as it emerged in public discourse in the 1986 Austrian presidential campaign of Kurt Waldheim (Wodak et al. 1990; Wodak 2001a, b, p. 70). Wodak and other scholars in her original Vienna group (such as Reisigl) share the transtextual, inter-discursive, sociopolitical, and historical perspective of the Duisburg group (Link 1992; Jäger 1993, 1996; Wodak 2001a, b<sup>5</sup>), as well as their interest in collective symbols and metaphors (Wodak and Reisigl 2001, p. 383). DHA adheres to the socio-philosophical orientation of critical theory (Reisigl and Wodak 2001) and features a multi-methodological, interdisciplinary analysis of empirical data as well as the integration of available background information into the analysis of different layers of a spoken or written text (Krzyzanowski and Wodak 2009, p. 21; Ahmadvand 2011). Analysts applying this approach perceive both written and spoken language to be a form of social practice and assume a dialectical relationship between certain discursive practices and the situations they are embedded in (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). Of the founders of CDA, Wodak is the one who has most insisted on the incorporation of historical data into any discourse analysis. She has also focused on issues of methodology in CDA (hence the name of her 2001/2009a coedited books with Meyer).

Reisigl and Wodak (2009, pp. 95–96) characterize the ten most important principles of DHA in the following way: (1) it is interdisciplinary, (2) it is problem oriented, (3) various theories and methods are combined, (4) the research incorporates fieldwork and ethnography, (5) the research moves recursively between theory and empirical data, (6) numerous genres and public spaces as well as intertextual and interdiscursive relationships are studied, (7) the historical context is taken into account in interpreting texts and discourses, (8) categories and tools are not fixed

<sup>5</sup> See the discussion of S. Jäger’s work in Dispositive Analysis below.

once and for all, (9) “grand theories” are used as a foundation, but “middle-range theories” give a better theoretical basis, and (10) the application of results and the communication of them to the public is important.

The definition of “discourse” is complex: “a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action; socially constituted and socially constitutive; related to a macro-topic; linked to the argumentation about validity claims such as truth and normative validity involving several social actors who have different points of view” (Reisigl and Wodak 2009, p. 89). In sum, Reisigl and Wodak regard relations to a macro-topic, many perspectives, and “argumentativity as constitutive elements of a discourse” (2009, p. 89). They distinguish between “text” and “discourse” in that “texts” are parts of “discourses” and can be assigned to *genres*, a genre being “a socially ratified way of using language in connection with a particular type of social activity” (Fairclough 1995a, p. 14). They also rely on *intertextuality* (the way in which texts are linked to other texts, e.g., through taking a portion of one text and inserting it into another text, as in quotes) and *interdiscursivity* (the way in which discourses are linked to each other, e.g., a discourse on one topic may refer to topics or subtopics of other discourses; Reisigl and Wodak 2009, pp. 89–90).

As noted above, Wodak’s early work in Vienna focused on institutional communication and speech barriers in court, schools, and hospital clinics (Wodak 1996), but she later focused on sexism and contemporary anti-Semitism and racism (Krzyżanowski and Wodak 2009; Wodak 2009). The principal aim of her Vienna group’s work was the practical application of critical research, such as in providing guidelines for doctors on how to communicate more effectively with patients or expert opinions for courts on anti-Semitic and racist language use by journalists in newspapers (Wodak 2011b and references therein). Scholars in DHA have traditionally attempted to “establish a theory of discourse by linking fields of action (Girnth 1996), *genres*, *discourses* and *texts*” (Wodak and Meyer 2009b, p. 26). Thus, discourses (between discursive practices and fields of action such as situations, institutional frames, and social structures) are considered to be linguistic social practices that constitute nondiscursive and discursive social practices and, at the same time, are constituted by them (Wodak and Meyer 2009b, p. 21).

DHA generally focuses on politics, developing a framework for political discourse, and analysts make sure not to get lost in “theoretical labyrinths,” but instead attempt to develop conceptual tools that are adequate for specific social problems (Wodak and Meyer 2009b, p. 26). This approach also adopts van Dijk’s notions of “positive self” and “negative other” presentation, but does not emphasize a top-down manipulation of the “elite” by the masses of ordinary people, nor does it stress sociocognitivism.

According to Wodak, DHA has three major dimensions:

1. Analyze the topics/contents of a particular discourse with racist, anti-Semitic, nationalist, or ethnicist elements, (i.e., topics such as collective identity, employment issues, welfare state issues, law and order issues, liberal values issues, anti/pro-establishment, immigrant status, and racism/antiracism).

2. Investigate the discursive strategies used (i.e., strategies used for positive self/negative other representation with the objective of constructing in-groups/out-groups).
3. Deconstruct the linguistic means and linguistic realizations of the discursive practices (i.e., naturalizing and depersonalizing metaphors, synecdoche; Wodak and Meyer 2009b, p. 29).

A final but highly important element of Wodak's approach, which differentiates her from many adherents of CDA, is the inclusion of the "inside perspective" (an ethnographic approach) to examine the ways in which minorities or migrants actually experience racial discrimination in today's societies (Krzyzanowski and Wodak 2009, p. 4). One way this is accomplished is by conducting focus groups in which relevant topics regarding the issue at hand are discussed. For a clear example of how DHA works, see *The Politics of exclusion: Debating migration in Austria* (Krzyzanowski and Wodak 2009), as well as Reisigl and Wodak (2009, pp. 96–120) on climate change.

DHA is currently thriving through Wodak's prolific scholarship and the continual development of DHA which she combines with several fields in discourse analysis. On her website (<http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/profiles/ruth-wodak>), Wodak refers to DHA as "an interdisciplinary, problem-oriented approach which analyses the changes of discursive practices over time and in various genres." Now retired from Lancaster University, Wodak is currently involved in multiple projects related to DHA such as the investigation of the discourse, rhetoric, and argumentation of populist right-wing politicians across Europe. The following scholarly papers by Wodak (and colleagues and (former) students) provide some recent examples of current work in DHA: De Cillia et al. (1999), Wodak et al. (1999), Clarke et al. (2012), Forchtner et al. (2013), and Wodak (2013a), Wodak (2013b). Other examples of DHA in CDA include Graham et al. (2004), Pavlenko (2005), Machin and Suleiman (2006), Krzyzanowski (2010), Khosravnik (2010), and an article by Fairclough to appear in Chilton and Wodak, *New Directions in Critical Discourse Analysis*, not yet published.

## 2.4 Social Actors Approach, Theo van Leeuwen

The social actors approach (SAA) to CDA, associated with Theo van Leeuwen, is "based on the idea that discourses are recontextualizations of social practices" (van Leeuwen 2009, p. 148; see also van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999) and is influenced by a wide range of sociological and linguistic theories utilizing sources from Malinowski to Parsons to Bernstein and Bourdieu (Wodak and Meyer 2009b, p. 26). Based on early linguistic study of texts and concepts such as "background knowledge" (Brown and Yule 1983; Levinson 1983), and the work of Martin (1984, 1992), who "reintroduced the 'field' of discourse, using lexical cohesion analysis to construct 'activity sequences'—sequences of represented activities" (van Leeuwen 2009, p. 147), as well as the work of Gleason (1973) and Grimes (1975) "who paid

attention, not just to represented activities, but also to represented ‘roles,’ ‘settings,’ etc.” (van Leeuwen 2009, p. 147), van Leeuwen extended the ideas beyond procedural and narrative texts, to other types of texts in which the rhetorical, argumentative structure differs greatly from the underlying discourse. Finally, in his study of the way discourses transform social practices, van Leeuwen recognizes his debt to Halliday (1978, 1985) and the critical linguists (Fowler et al. 1979, Kress and Hodge 1979) whom he credits with having shown how Halliday’s ideas can be used for CDA.

The beginning of SAA (which overlaps with social semiotics and early work in CDA) can be traced to the work of van Leeuwen (1993, 1996, 2009) and the development of a taxonomy (actors analysis) that allows for the analysis of both written and oral data. Since its development, this taxonomy has been widely applied to data analysis (Wodak 2011b). SAA links the idea that participants in discourses (referred to as social actors) permanently constitute and reproduce social structure with a Foucauldian (Foucault 1977b; see also Fairclough 2000) notion of “discourses (note the plural) as *socially constructed ways of knowing some aspect of reality...context-specific frameworks for making sense of things*” (van Leeuwen 2009, p. 144), models of the world (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 6). The theoretical core of SAA is based on the idea that “discourses are ultimately modeled on social practices” (van Leeuwen 2009, p. 145), and, therefore, practice is primary—that is, representation of social actors is based on what people do and thus texts (which are the evidence for the existence of discourses) should be interpreted as representations of social practice. In addition, van Leeuwen stresses the difference between social practices and representations of social practices, noting that in many texts, aspects of representation are more important than the representation of the social practice (2008, p. 6).

In SAA, analysis focuses on sociological categories (such as “nomination” or “agency”) instead of linguistic categories such as “nouns” or “passive sentence” and while examining a range of linguistic and rhetorical phenomena, the elements examined are linked through the concept of “social actors” rather than linguistic concepts such as “nominal groups” (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 25). Van Leeuwen offers an expansive inventory of the ways we can classify people and the ideological effects these classifications can have. These classifications often include personalization and impersonalization (Do we phrase the statement as “Professor Randolph required students to attend the conference” or “The university required students to attend the conference?”), individualism versus collectivization (“Two women, Mary Smith and Lisa Gonzalez, were injured in the riots” or “Protesters were injured in the riots”—humanizing versus dehumanizing?), specification and genericization (Are they represented as specific individuals or a generic type such as “a Muslim man?”), nomination or functionalization (Are they named in terms of who they are or what they do?), use of honorifics (titles that suggest a degree of seniority or respect such as the use of Arizona *Sheriff* Arpaio to legitimize the arrest of a Latino man and connect it to immigration issues (from Catalano and Waugh 2013b), objectivization (when objects are represented through a feature such as “the beauty”), anonymization (such as when sources are not named by using terms like “Some people...”), aggregation (when participants are quantified and treated as statistics,

as in “Hundreds of immigrants...” and suppression (e.g., exclusion of social actors or parts of an event in a text; Machin and Mayr 2012a, p. 85).

Besides being identifiable in linguistic text, a variation of these same categories can also be identified visually. With regard to personalizing or impersonalizing or representing people as individuals or groups, image can do the same by showing photos of people all dressed in the same way, e.g., van Leeuwen’s picture of Muslim women wearing veils (2008, p. 145). Three key factors in representing people in images are distance, angle, and gaze. Just as in real life, in image, distance signifies social relations (p. 97); and, in pictures, distance becomes symbolic (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 138). Thus, if people are shown in a close-up shot, this represents intimacy, and the social actors are seen as “one of us.” The opposite is true if the camera distance is a long shot. In the case of angle, vertical angle (whether we see the person from above, at eye level, or from below) can relate power distances. Thus, looking down on someone/something is the same as exerting imaginary symbolic power over that person, while looking up at someone/something represents symbolic power over the viewer and authority or respect (e.g., photographs of eagles with upward camera angles symbolizing their majestic nature). The horizontal camera angle (whether we see a person frontally or from the side—or somewhere in between) can symbolize involvement or detachment, depending on the context, and can lead to objectivization, because they are not looking at us and thus they are objects for our scrutiny (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 141).

Also important in how we represent social actors visually is what or who is excluded from the image, such as in van Leeuwen’s example (2008) of Playmobil toys having no black, brown, or yellow people, and the roles people play in the actions in the image (e.g., a photo supposedly representing the Roma people, where the social actors are shown begging; see Catalano 2012). In SAA, the choices journalists make in how people are represented are based on the way they wish to signpost what kind of person they are representing (Machin and Mayr 2012a, p. 103). Thus, it is essential to describe carefully the different representational strategies for different participants according to the categories shown above (or variations of them whether verbal or visual) and connect this to broader discourses. In order to see SAA in action (which is necessary in order to understand how it works), see van Leeuwen (2008, 2009, pp. 145–160), Da Silva (2012), Hong (2012), Kheirabadi and Moghaddam (2012), Machin and Mayr (2012a, b), and Adami and Kress (2013), to name a few.

## 2.5 *Dispositive Analysis: Siegfried Jäger and Florentine Maier*

Many who practice CDA recognize implicitly or explicitly the influence of Michel Foucault’s discourse theory on CDA; from the beginning Fairclough invariably cited Foucault (see especially Fairclough 1992a, Chap. 2: “Michel Foucault and the analysis of discourse,” pp. 37–61); but few actually apply Foucault’s work in discourse analysis—rather they “put Foucault’s perspective to work” (Courtine 1981,

p. 40, cited by Fairclough 1992a, p. 38). However, dispositive analysis (DispA) is, in essence, CDA based on Michel Foucault's discourse theory (Jäger and Maier 2009). At the heart of this theory are the issues of what is knowledge (and discourse, for that matter), how it arises and is passed on, what function it has for constituting subjects, and what impact knowledge has on societal shaping and development (Jäger and Maier 2009, p. 34). The DispA approach (as described by Jäger and Maier 2009) is oriented toward the cultural sciences and of all the approaches reviewed in this chapter, it is the least focused on the structural/grammatical/linguistic features of a text (the micro-level) and the most focused on the macro-level, "large categories, identified with equally large chunks of often undeconstructed text" (Threadgold 2003, p. 11). "Discourse analysis and its extension, dispositive analysis, aim to identify the knowledges contained in discourses and dispositives, and how these knowledges are firmly connected to power relations in power/knowledge complexes" (Jäger and Maier 2009, pp. 34–35).

Link and his team are the scholars most closely associated with developing this approach (1983). According to Link, a "discourse" is defined as "an institutional way of talking that regulates and reinforces action and thereby exerts power" (Link 1983, p. 60; Jäger and Maier 2009, p. 45). *Discourse*, in this approach, can also be seen as the flow of all societal knowledge stored over time (Jäger 1993, 1999), which determines individual and collective actions and exercises power, thus shaping society (Jäger and Maier 2009). *Discourse strands* exist at the level of concrete utterances located on the surface of texts (Foucault 2002). Both are different from a (single) text since "a discourse with its recurring contents, symbols and strategies, leads to the emergence and solidification of 'knowledge' and therefore has sustained effects" (Jäger and Maier 2009, p. 38). As to "power over discourse," since discourses are supra-individual, they take on a life of their own as they evolve. However, groups who have power can effect changes in discourse, for example, because they have access to the media or more wealth.

DispA serves as an important analytical strategy for many CDA practitioners, enabling them to examine the multiple and complex dimensions of power manifested in the dynamic relationship of discourses, actions, and objects (Andersen 2003, p. 27; Caborn 2007, p. 113; Jäger and Maier 2009, pp. 39–42; Bussolini 2010, p. 89). Analysts using this approach "look to statements not so much for what they say but what they *do*; that is, one questions what the constitutive or political effects of saying this instead of that might be?" (Graham 2011, p. 667). Moreover, the dispositive contributes to discourse analysis by insisting that analysis move beyond the exclusive domain of language towards the analysis of nonlinguistic elements.

As Foucault explains, the dispositive is a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as (or even less than) the unsaid (Foucault 1980, p. 194). The dispositive is essentially the "net which can be woven" between the abovementioned elements (Foucault 1978, pp. 119–120) and in essence, the interplay of discursive practices (e.g., writing, thinking), nondiscursive practices (sawing a tree, walking across the street, examining someone's teeth) and



manifestations/materializations of these practices (e.g., constructing a building, the existence of a school building), and the relationship between all these elements (Jäger and Maier 2009, p. 39). It is an eclectic assemblage of language and material objects that attempts to show how forms are linked together as functional elements of an apparatus. This heterogeneity of elements is significant to Foucault's analysis of discursive and nondiscursive practices of a dispositive, and Foucault conceptualized the various elements of a dispositive not as mutually exclusive but as connected. Thus, it is "not so much the individual elements that make[...]up [a dispositive but] the particular arrangement and the relations between them" (Bus-solini 2010, p. 92). The arrangement and relations of the elements of a dispositive are important because they arise in response to a particular need. When an urgent situation occurs, society responds by organizing text, talk, people, organizations, institutions, and materials together (Jäger and Maier 2009, p. 42). When these various elements come together, that is, when they are connected with the purpose of addressing a crisis, the connections constitute the dispositive. While Foucault sees these elements as being somehow connected, he does not *explicitly* link discursive and nondiscursive practices together and is rather ambiguous about the "bond" between them.

In an attempt to clarify this bond (that links subject, object, discourse, and material reality), Jäger and Maier address this blind spot in Foucault's theory by proposing a different conceptualization of the dispositive, one which puts a premium on nondiscursive practices (human action) as central to their understanding, attempting to mediate between subject and object, discursive and nondiscursive practices (activities) on the one hand and manifestations (objects) on the other (Wodak and Meyer 2009a). Turning to Leont'ev's activity theory (1978) in order to extend Foucault's notion of the dispositive, Jäger and Maier make an explicit connection among discourses, actions, and objects. In activity theory, meaning is assigned to an object when a need arises, for which human action is employed in order to shape raw materials into purposeful objects used to fulfill that specific need. More precisely, "meaning is assigned to an object through work" (Jäger and Maier 2009, p. 43). Leont'ev's activity theory (1978), they point out, is significant because it explains human action as the "bond" that connects "subject and object, society and objective reality" (Jäger and Maier 2009, p. 43). In this view, the dispositive is the connection between discursive practices (thinking and talking), nondiscursive practices (human action), and materialization (objects produced by human action) together, all of which are based on knowledge that is transmitted through discourse. Discourse is seen as powerful because it transports knowledge, which is the basis of all thinking and talking, acting, and material objects. On the basis of knowledge, we not only ascribe meaning to objects but also conduct our actions around the meanings we ascribe to them. This means that the attribution of meaning always entails physical action. Human action is used to transform raw materials into objects, which retain their meaning insofar as the discourse sustains them.

The DispA approach can be seen in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1979) and *History of Sexuality* (1978) as well as in Klemperer's (1995) diaries. However, in these examples, the method is applied implicitly by "analyzing the discourses,

assembling knowledge, consulting statistics, critically deconstructing them, drawing conclusions from them and so on” (Jäger and Maier 2009, p. 61). Thus, traditionally, there has been no explicit “how to book” on DispA, but according to Jäger and Maier, these examples (and others listed below) can be used to generate ideas as to how we can analyze discourse, action, and the resulting materializations and/or manifestations in the future. They themselves provide “a little toolbox for discourse analysis” (Jäger and Maier 2009, pp. 52–56) and point the reader to Jäger’s (2004) methodological justification for each of the tools. Recently, Graham (2011) has attempted to remedy this lack of a model for Foucauldian discourse analysis by developing a methodological plan for dispositive analysis that includes description, recognition, and classification and provides clear examples for each. Scholars interested in DispA might find Graham’s article useful (particularly in educational research) and in tracing “the relationship between words and things: how the words we use to conceptualize and communicate end up producing the very ‘things’ or objects of which we speak” (p. 668). Other works associated with the DispA approach include Link (1992), Jäger (1993, 2004, 1996), Popkewitz and Lindblad (2000), Jäger and Jäger (2007); Graham (2007, 2009), Graham and Slee (2008), McGrath (2008). And, according to Jäger and Maier 2009, p. 60, Klemperer (1999–2001) “can be read as a dispositive analysis.”

Having finished our discussion of the major approaches in CDA—and with apologies for leaving any out—we will now turn to a topic that will undoubtedly be of interest to readers of this volume, namely, the relationship between CDA and pragmatics.

### 3 Critical Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics

As seen in the previous section, there are many different views of what CDA is and thus it is difficult to give an overall account of the relationship between CDA and pragmatics. Some proponents of CDA often incorporate pragmatics or use some of the findings of pragmatics in their analyses, but they often do not make this clear or even recognize that they are incorporating elements from pragmatics. As a result, the “relationship of discourse analysis and pragmatics cannot be answered absolutely and definitely, but only relatively” and this relationship is not clear-cut or mono-directional (Reisigl 2011, pp. 13, 23). Indeed, in the research process for this chapter, few articles/chapters/books were uncovered that clearly stated that they were a combination of CDA and pragmatics.

Although “there is no commonly accepted definition of *pragmatics* in linguistics which would refer to a single, unified and homogeneous field of study” (Bublitz and Norrick 2011, p. 3), there is a “family” of definitions that bring pragmatics close to the definitions of DA: Pragmatics is a perspective or an orientation towards language use, looks at language use in relation to its users, is concerned with the way in which humans use language in social contexts, analyzes the functioning of language, investigates how people achieve meaning in particular contexts, deals with language use in contexts of situations, focuses more on the spoken rather than

the written use of language, and deals with everyday talk and conversation (I. Mey 2001; J. Mey 2000; 2001; Bublitz and Norrick 2011; Zienkowski 2011). Pragmatics is sometimes seen as just one of a number of (sub)disciplines of linguistics which deal with language use and may be subordinate to or overlap with DA, or it is often conceived of as a separate approach to language which overlaps in certain ways with linguistics.<sup>6</sup>

Some of the practitioners of CDA (Fairclough 2001b, p. 7; Reisigl 2011) have pointed out that there is an especially wide gulf between two general approaches to pragmatics. The first one is an earlier approach that came about when linguists began to explore phenomena of “performance” (language use) and adopted ideas developed by Ryle (1945), Strawson (1950), Wittgenstein (1953), Austin (1962), and the “ordinary language” philosophers, and later was associated with analytical philosophy and especially “speech acts” (Austin 1962; Searle 1969), although not exclusively. This led to what some have called the “pragmatic turn” in linguistics (Bublitz and Norrick 2011, p. 2), when attention turned to utterance (rather than sentence/word) meaning. From a CDA point of view, the key insight is “that language can be seen as a form of action...the idea of uttering as acting is an important one” (Fairclough 2001b, p. 7). However, in the UK and the US, this perspective developed into a narrow Anglo-American, analytical–philosophical conception of pragmatics. What is studied are deixis/indexicality, speech acts, presupposition and inference, maxims of conversation, and the cooperative principle. However, “all the early work on speech acts, presupposition and inference was based on introspection and invented examples in imagined contexts (Austin, Searle, Strawson and Grice”; Bublitz and Norrick 2011, p. 5), as against the tendencies in (critical) DA.

According to Blum-Kulka and Hamo (2011), more recently, pragmatics has offered specific analytic frameworks for understanding how language works, which have been “adopted by students of discourse and applied to the analysis of actual sequences of text and talk in context, rather than isolated utterances, as in classic pragmatics” (p. 143). Such research is often referred to as *discourse pragmatics*, and has often gone beyond the core pragmatic models, incorporating influences from other approaches (p. 143). Three seminal models from core traditions in pragmatics which have been adopted in DA encompass Grice’s approach to conversation, which is concerned with the ways interlocutors recognize each other’s communicative intentions (Grice 1975, 1989), and includes the cooperative principle (and the maxims of quality, quantity, manner and relevance); speech act theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1969, 1979), which is concerned with classification of communicative intentions and ways they are linguistically encoded in context; and politeness theory (Brown and Levinson 1987), which “builds on the assumption of cooperation, and suggests that social motivations can explain deviations from explicitness and directness and their social implications” (Blum-Kulka and Hamo 2011, p. 152).

CD analysts see many weaknesses and limitations of these and other types of Anglo-American pragmatics, including: (1) its focus on the individual (Fairclough

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<sup>6</sup> In their introduction to the volume *Foundations of Pragmatics*, the first one in the new series, *Handbooks of Pragmatics*, published by Mouton de Gruyter.

2001a, pp. 7–8) rather than society; (2) an underestimation of the extent to which language use is subject to both social conventions and strategic creativity, leading to a need for a theory of social action and social practice, which is lacking; (3) an idealized, almost Utopian, image of linguistic interaction between equals, rather than an understanding of linguistic practice as subject to social struggles and permeated with inequalities of power; (4) a focus in many cases on single invented sentences rather than real utterances in extended discourse; (5) difficulty in defining speech acts in actual language use; (6) narrowness and disciplinary basis rather than being cross-, trans-, or interdisciplinary (Reisigl 2011, p. 20); (7) not enough focus on linguistic practices and multimodal semiotic complexities; (8) an understanding of context that is too narrow (van Dijk 2008, van Dijk 2009a); (9) a view of language as an abstraction without variation by speaker, region or time; (10) a view of language as a noncultural, nonsocial, static, depersonalized object independent of context and discourse; (11) closeness to a formalist model of language in some cases, and thus the definition of pragmatics (and sometimes also of discourse) as an additional “module” of language; and (12) acknowledgement of, but no real engagement with, the issues of social context (see Fairclough 2001a, pp. 7–8; Bublitz and Norrick 2011, p. 4).

The other conception of pragmatics is a much broader point of view, typically associated with (continental) European scholars, who define pragmatics as “the science of language use” (Fairclough 2001b, p. 7, who refers to the first issue of the *Journal of Pragmatics* in 1977; see also Levinson 1983; Verschueren 1999; J. Mey 2001; Reisigl 2011; Bublitz and Norrick 2011, p. 4). From this point of view, (1) authentic language use and actual language users in interaction are primary; (2) the focus is on whole speech events or language games in real social contexts, considering both the present state of affairs, in connection with prior and succeeding actions, and as a unique historical event created by actual speakers to perform linguistic acts in an actual situational context in order to accomplish specific goals; (3) it focuses on micro-phenomena and sees the “messiness” of language in real embodied human contexts, where participants with personalities, feelings, and goals interact in complex ways with physical objects and other participants within institutions and communities (Bublitz and Norrick 2011, p. 4); (4) it is interdisciplinary in nature and encompasses a variety of researchers, research programs, heuristics, methodologies, objects of investigation, and terminologies. According to Fairclough (2001a, p. 7), there are tendencies in this European view of pragmatics which are compatible with what he was then calling critical language studies and which was later developed in CDA, although there are also differences. In particular, CDA examines in more depth the social, political, and historical aspects of context than pragmatics does and pays more attention to the concrete performance of linguistic practices and the specific conditions and practices of language production, distribution, and reception. In addition, CDA is more focused on multimodal semiotic complexities than pragmatics is.

While there are some in European approaches to pragmatics who see it as encompassing linguistics, and, thus, CDA, and other approaches see pragmatics as a (sub)discipline of linguistics, neither of these conceptions of pragmatics is preva-

lent in CDA, as we saw in our discussion of the common approaches to CDA discussed in the previous section, none of which spoke of CDA in either of these ways. Indeed, for the proponents of CDA, pragmatics is most often seen as an aid, part of the “toolkit” of the analyst; it thus ranges from being a side discipline to overlapping with each of these approaches in undetermined ways.

A further division of European pragmatics is of importance to CDA, namely, the distinction between *pragmalinguistics* and *sociopragmatics*, first introduced by Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983), who differentiate *pragmalinguistics* (roughly, the form used to achieve an intended pragmatic effect) and *sociopragmatics* (roughly, when a particular pragmatic strategy should be used; see also Marmaridou 2011; Bublitz and Norrick 2011). While the borderline between the two may, at times, seem fuzzy, *pragmalinguistics* can be defined as the “language-specific” study of the resources a language provides for conveying pragmatic meaning (illocutionary and interpersonal), whereas *sociopragmatics* is the “culture-specific” study of “external pragmatic factors affecting language use” and “relates pragmatic meaning to an assessment of participants’ social distance, the language community’s social rules and appropriateness norms, discourse practices, and accepted behaviours” (Marmaridou 2011, pp. 77, 80).

This conceptual dichotomy of understanding language as a system used for communication purposes (*pragmalinguistics*) or as an action domain that co-constructs social order in culturally sanctioned ways (*sociopragmatics*) helps make the relation to CDA much clearer. In this sense, it is *sociopragmatics* that has a closer connection to CDA than other areas of pragmatics, because of its relation to earlier work in Marxist pragmatics (Mey 1979), its attention to the co-construction of social and cultural practices in context, its intersection with studies in sociolinguistics (see Bublitz and Norrick 2011, p. 9), and its relation to the sociological interface of pragmatics (Marmaridou 2011, p. 83). According to Bublitz and Norrick (2011, p. 9), *sociopragmatics* “foreshadows work in critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995a).” In CDA, pragmatics has been incorporated successfully in the analysis of media discourse by utilizing pragmatically oriented concepts, such as discourse as social action or intersubjective inference rules, and applying them to analysis of diverse genres such as political campaigns (see Tolson 2006; Blum-Kulka and Hamo 2011, pp. 157–158).

Of the major CD analysts, van Dijk and Wodak have the most background in pragmatics and thus have used pragmatics consistently in their pre-CDA and current CDA/CDS work. Van Dijk uses only speech act theory in his work; he had two early books (in 1977 and 1981) that included a discussion of pragmatics. These were both published before he became interested in what would become CDA, but in his proto-CDA 1984 book, he has a section on “pragmatic and conversational strategies” (pp. 143–152) and a glance at his CDA (and CDS/DS) work shows that he continues to integrate pragmatics into his work. Wodak also used pragmatics in her earlier work; and in 2007 (p. 203), she gives some examples of pragmatic devices that can be useful for CDA, such as insinuations/allusions, wordplay, presuppositions, and implicatures, and asserts that work such as her own, that deconstructs explicit prejudiced utterances as well as inferred and indirect linguistic devices must turn to

the “pragmatic toolbox” to be able to systematically detect and analyze hidden and coded meanings which often appear as cues in the text (2007, p. 204).

A few examples of recent work that incorporate CDA and pragmatics (encompassing sociopragmatics or that combine CDA and pragmatics without explicitly saying they do) include Charteris-Black’s 2004 book (also discussed below) which incorporates corpus-based cognitive and pragmatic approaches to metaphor in political discourse, press reporting, and religious discourse; Wodak’s study on the analysis of election speeches by Austrian right-wing politician Jörg Haider in the 2001 Vienna election (2007), Bhatia and Bhatia’s work on discursive illusions in legislative discourse (2011), van Dijk’s work on analysis of immigration discourse in the Spanish parliament (2011) and the role of knowledge in discourse processing (2012b, c, d), Biria and Mohammadi’s (2012) study on the sociopragmatic functions of inaugural speeches, and Mulderrig’s (2012) corpus-based analysis of deixis in education policy.

Having covered the tie between CDA and pragmatics, we now turn to a very brief discussion of the critiques of CDA and how scholars have responded.

## 4 Critique of CDA and the Creation of Critical Discourse Studies

### 4.1 Critique of CDA

Although CDA offers substantial potential applications in a wide range of contexts, it has received its share of criticism. While we cannot cover the extensive critique of CDA in its entirety in this chapter, we attempt to briefly outline the major issues beginning with questions about the word “critical” itself. With regard to the “critical” aspect, Billig (2002) draws special attention to the role of this term in self-understanding and marketing of CDA. He argues that using the term “critical” sets up a dichotomy in which CDA is constructed as positive, while noncritical approaches are considered to be the opposite, even (or especially) when they claim to be neutral/descriptive/nonideological, etc. Thus, “[i]f we appraise CDA critically, we should therefore be aware that the use of the term ‘critical’ is itself significant as what has been termed ‘a rhetoric of self-praise’” (Billig 2002, p. 37). Chilton even goes so far as to ask, whether there might exist an innate ‘critical instinct’ (2005a). If this is the case, he asks, as represented in Wodak and Meyer (2009b, p. 14), “what is the role of critical discourse analysis?” He further questions, “whether CDA has had genuine social effects” (Chilton 2005a, p. 21). Bartlett echoes this, asking if CDA has ever really offered genuine emancipatory alternatives (2012), while van Dijk claims that the approach has often resulted in a “blame game” rather than contributing to any real solutions or resistance (2009a, p. 4).

Other areas of critique in CDA include methodological/theoretical shortcomings (in which there seems to be a consensus that CDA’s analytical models are, in

general, too vague), the fact that CDA often fails to take context, in a large sense, into account (Breeze 2011, p. 514) and overreliance on the analyst's view of a text's possible meaning which points to a need for inclusion of discussion with the producers and readers of texts (Widdowson 1998). Furthermore, CDA has been criticized for being "too linguistic," and putting "a very high price on linguistic-textual analysis, more specifically on systemic-functional linguistics" (SFL, Blommaert 2005, p. 34), while excluding other critical schools that look at language. Another main disadvantage of CDA, according to Blommaert (2005), is that CDA depends on available discourse, and there is thus no way to analyze discourse that is absent. CDA has also been accused of focusing too much on the negative rather than contributing to bringing real solutions to make needed changes in the world, being eurocentric and paying little attention to "the possibilities of the existence of other cultural concepts, theory and approaches, and of their own cultural limitations and bias" (Shi-xu 2012, p. 485) and not being reflexive enough to be sure that analysts' "own use of language is not marked, even corrupted, by those ideological factors that they seek to identify in the language of others" (Billig 2008, p. 783).

In response to this multilayered critique of CDA, analysts have redefined CDA, incorporating new frameworks and a shift in analytic focus. Some ways in which scholars have responded to the critique are outlined in brief in the following sections that discuss the creation of CDS as well as other recent trends.

## 4.2 *The Creation of Critical Discourse Studies*

In 2004, a new journal, called *Critical Discourse Studies*, founded and initially edited by van Dijk, was launched partly in reaction to some of the critiques of CDA discussed above and also as a forum for work in CDA and the (new) trend in CDS.<sup>7</sup> According to the mission statement by Fairclough, Graham, Lemke, and Wodak (published in the first issue of the journal), the goal was to widen the scope of CDA—and to acknowledge the wide(ned) scope of CDA—through using the term "Studies," thereby aligning it with other areas like "gender studies," which incorporate many disciplines and are avowedly transdisciplinary in nature and are not as tied to linguistic analysis of texts. According to the *CDS* website, the journal seeks to further "our understanding of how discourse figures in social processes, social structures, and social change." In addition, *CDS* is eclectic in its theoretical position, with roots stemming from the Frankfurt School, linguistic anthropology, gender studies, communication studies, social geography, education, and critical literacy, to name but a few. Van Dijk also emphasized that the approach "involves critical *analysis*, but also *critical theory*, as well as *critical applications*. The designation CDS may also avoid the widespread misconception that a critical approach is a *method* of discourse analysis" (2009b, p. 62). He also underscored that CDS "characterizes

<sup>7</sup> Note that the journal *Critical Discourse Studies* and its acronym *CDS* are in italics in the text, while the trend in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) is denoted in regular font.

scholars rather than their methods: CDS scholars are socio-politically committed to social equality and justice” (p. 63). It is a problem-oriented approach to DA that examines the ways in which discourse reproduces “social domination” or “power abuse of one group over others, and how dominated groups may discursively resist such abuse” (p. 63). Thus, a CDS approach assumes that things do not have to be the way they currently are (see Fairclough et al. 2004a, p. 1) and transcends theory to offer solutions that are connected to social movements.

*CDS* reflects the transdisciplinary growth of a new field “which draws upon but goes beyond established enclaves of specialized work on discourse, such as critical discourse analysis, attracting scholars from a considerable range of disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities who are beginning to develop new syntheses between discourse analysis and a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives” (Fairclough et al. 2004a, p. 3). The purpose of this shift in focus is to open dialogue between disciplines that have been known for intellectual myopia, to learn from each other and to gain a deeper understanding of the very issues under investigation. In his editorial comments, in the first volume of *CDS* (2004a, p. 152), Luke invokes Habermas’s (1998) call to “move from facts to norms, to build from rich, triangulated studies of discourse change and discourse use to normative models that can form the basis for social interventions, policies and reconstruction”. Unlike some approaches to CDA, post-structuralism and neo-Marxism can coexist within CDS, as can “Marxian theory, Bakhtinian language theory, and Foucaultian discourse theories” (McKenna 2004, p. 11). It is, in fact, not the origin of the theory that matters, as much as the betterment of society.

While the founding of *CDS* opened up new venues for the publication of work in CDA and CDS, broadly defined, there were other trends that were also emerging, influenced by either CDA or CDS or the two combined to which we will now turn.

## 5 Trends in CDA/CDS

In this section, we will treat some of the current transdisciplinary trends in CDA which, while they might not have been caused by the creation of CDS alongside CDA and they might not all have been influenced greatly by the critique of CDA given above, have been developing in neighboring disciplines/fields best known to the co-authors of this chapter: PDA, CDA and multimodality; the incorporation of cognitive linguistics, including a focus on critical metaphor and metonymy analysis, and critical applied linguistics (AL).

### 5.1 *Positive Discourse Analysis*

The emergence of PDA can be traced to James R. Martin’s repeated call for a PDA with a focus on texts that analysts do not find objectionable. According to Haig (2004, p. 13), Martin’s analysis of excerpts from the autobiography of Nelson



Mandela or the music of U2 (2000) are excellent examples of the kind of work he is referring to here:

If discourse analysts are serious about wanting to use their work to enact social change, then they will have to broaden their coverage to include discourse of this kind—discourse that inspires, encourages, heartens; discourse we like, that cheers us along. We need, in other words, more positive discourse analysis (PDA?) alongside our critique; and this means dealing with texts we admire, alongside those we dislike and try to expose. (Martin, p. 196–7)

Other articles (Martin 2000, 2002a, b) and particularly the book by Martin and Rose (2003) also provided excellent examples of the kind of work he referred to.

In a later (2004) article, Martin used the term “positive discourse analysis” without the question mark (see Bartlett 2012, p. 8). In this article, he provides three examples of what PDA is, including genre renovation, evaluative language, and narrative in the context of postcolonial relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Here, he shows how the government report *Bringing Them Home* (that details the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families) gives voice to Indigenous Australians through multimodal discourse “involving a mix of ‘spoken’ testimony with bureaucratic writing,...language and photographic image” (Martin 2004, p. 9). In addition, Martin suggests “that communities are formed around attitudes to things” noting that “aligning readers depends as much on empathy as persuasion” and “the political power of narrative closure is something positive discourse analysis cannot afford to ignore” (pp. 13, 18).

Since 2004, PDA has become a new trend in CDA, rooted in the conviction that deconstruction of social problems is not synonymous with positive reconstruction and betterment of society. PDA thus functions as an alternative to traditional CDA critique of discourse and addresses the need for “a complementary focus on community, taking into account how people get together and make room for themselves in the world—in ways that redistribute power without necessarily struggling against it” (Martin 2004, p. 7). In this regard, PDA serves the role of making visible different social actors by giving voice and thus presence to those who have been traditionally marginalized by dominant discourse practices. PDA fills the gaps in CDA analysis by recognizing the marginalized voices of the oppressed in new multimodal genres.

PDA is (re)constructive, and without PDA “our understanding of how change happens, for the better, across a range of sites [is crippled...]. And this hampers design, and perhaps even discourages it since analysts would rather tell us how struggle was undone than how freedoms were won” (Martin 2004, pp. 7–8). By examining texts from the perspective that moves beyond critique towards positive social changes, PD analysts envision and design an emancipatory alternative. Therefore, PDA “analyzes the discourse we like rather than the discourse we wish to criticize” (Macgilchrist 2007, p. 74) and seeks to tell how freedoms were won, take a stand and positively value some aspect of social change, which may involve “looking at discourses we don’t typically associate with CDA, and in addition considering whether new kinds of analysis are required by consideration of these sites” (Martin 2004, p. 8). This “yin and yang approach” in which both deconstructive

and constructive activity is required seeks to understand, expose, and resist social inequality by looking at both its positive and negative aspects (Bartlett 2012, p. 7).

Since 2004, PDA has not only become more common in CDA but has also spread to various disciplines such as political discourse analysis and education. Macgilchrist (2007) examines strategies for bringing forward marginal discourses into the mainstream news media. His paper discusses current research on counter discourse and takes a case-study approach to illustrate five strategies used in those few texts which contest the mainstream discourse, providing an excellent example of how PDA can be useful in the investigation of media discourse. In the realm of teacher education, Rogers and Mosley-Wetzel (2013) put forth an informative multimodal analysis of agency and leadership in a workshop about culturally relevant teaching. The authors argue that PDA is not a new approach, but instead, a shift in focus, and they demonstrate how the participant accepts and extends invitations for agency, uses problems to extend learning, as well as narratives and counter-narratives, and creates multiple story lines for herself and others. The authors then call for more PDA research that considers agency across contexts.

Despite PDA's new popularity, its emergence across disciplines and its attempts to address critiques aimed at CDA, PDA itself has been subject to a fair amount of criticism. Scholars such as Bartlett (2012) warn us that there is a danger in only focusing on and celebrating the positive without "due consideration of the social factors that created the conditions of possibility for such texts at the local level and how structural features within the wider sociopolitical context might make it possible for such positive change to take hold and spread" (p. 7). In addition, Bartlett asserts that PDA often lacks a detailed analysis of context that accounts for how hegemonic discourses continue to circulate, whose interests they serve, and an analysis of the tensions which exist, and how emergent reconfigurations of power relations at the local level can exploit these tensions to "reorient existing structural conditions of domination within the wider society" (p. 8). This then results in the failure of PDA to consider how the sociocultural background of both producers and receivers affects the meaning of texts, and often linguists take on the analysis of these texts instead of members of the target communities. To remedy this problem, scholars have made a call for the voices of the "oppressed" to be heard rather than solely the analyst's and for a comparison of the findings of the analyst with what the members of the target community think and say. Recent work in PDA (e.g., Bartlett 2012) has attempted to address these shortcomings, and it is hoped that this trend will continue.

## 5.2 *CDA and Multimodality*

*Multimodality* can be defined as when meanings are realized through more than one semiotic code, such as when a text includes visual, written, gestural, and musical resources for communication (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001). While there is no space for a complete history of the development of multimodal discourse analysis (MDA), we will attempt to give a very brief overview before we explain its connection to CDA. MDA, as a field of academic research, is a relatively recent phenomenon

strongly associated with Kress and van Leeuwen's *Reading Images* (1996/2006) and O'Toole's (1994/2011) *The Language of Displayed Art* (see Djonov and Zhao 2014). Since the publication of these two seminal works, MDA has gone in different directions and can be distinguished by two distinct approaches (social semiotics and interactional) and one emerging approach (cognitive theories of communication). The social semiotics approach is based on Halliday's (1978) theory of language that views language as "one of the semiotic systems that constitute a culture" (p. 2) and a text or act of communication as serving three metafunctions: *ideational meaning* (representing patterns of experience and logical relations among them), *interpersonal meaning* (conveying emotions and attitudes and enacting social relations), or *textual meaning* (interweaving ideational and interpersonal meanings into a cohesive and coherent semantic unit; Djonov and Zhao 2014, p. 3). Hodge and Kress (1988) took this focus on meaning and definition of culture as a set of semiotic systems even further by extending the theory beyond language to support dialogue on communication in all its forms and across different institutional contexts.

Thus, multimodal social semiotics seeks to theorize semiotic principles such as salience, style, and framing across different modes and their interaction, as well as to address the ways that multimodal meaning-making reflects the interests of meaning-makers, their access to semiotic resources and the norms that govern these semiotic practices (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001; van Leeuwen 2005; Kress 2010). This approach has been widely applied in the context of education, such as exploring multimodal learning in social interactions in diverse educational settings (see Jewitt and Kress 2003; Jewitt 2006), "giving students, teachers, and curriculum developers tools they can share for describing, analyzing, and evaluating multimodal meaning-making" (Djonov and Zhao 2014, p. 4) and setting the groundwork for multiliteracies pedagogies and equity in education (see Cope and Kalantzis 2000; Callow 2006; Thomas 2014; Unsworth 2014).

The second dominant approach to MDA is the interactional one, which is rooted in "anthropology, conversation analysis, linguistic ethnography, interactional sociolinguistics, and research on nonverbal communication" (Djonov and Zhao 2014, p. 4). This approach, highly influenced by the work of Vygotsky (1962, 1978) and Wertsch's notion of "mediated action" (1985), combines social semiotic frameworks with ethnographic methods to "investigate the role that discourse embodies" in concrete semiotic artifacts and "situated interactions in social change" (Djonov and Zhao 2014, p. 5). This approach is particularly useful because of the thick descriptions of social interactions it provides that aid in revealing the relationships among social actors in institutional practices such as news media.

The third and emerging approach is the cognitive approach influenced by cognitive theories concerned with establishing the conditions for effective communication (p. 5). Forceville, a key proponent of this approach, focuses on multimodal metaphor in print and TV ads, comics, cartoons, and film (1996, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2014; Forceville and Urios-Aparis 2009). This approach has also been applied to the study of multimodal experimental literature and the viewing and description of pictures (Holsanova 2008; Gibbons 2011), as well as gesture (Cienki 1998, 2008; Müller 2004; Mittelberg 2008; Cienki and Müller 2008a, b; Cienki 2009; Mittelberg and Waugh 2009).

Recently, MDA has developed another trend: Multimodal CDA (MCDA, sometimes referred to as critical multimodal discourse analysis (CMDA) or critical multimodal), in which multimodal analysis has been connected to CDA in order to gain a deeper understanding of critical issues and to examine more closely the interaction between verbal and nonverbal modes in discourse, which were previously ignored and for which CDA has been criticized as being “too linguistic” (see Machin, 2007; Machin and Mayr 2012a; Djonov and Zhao 2014 for details about Multimodal CDA). This connection between multimodal studies and CDA is a natural one, as scholars who work in the field of CMDA often draw heavily on work done in media and cultural studies, which has a long tradition of examining the ideological nature of visual representations and the power of the media to define visually the nature of people and events in the world (Machin 2007, p. xiv). In addition, both CDA and MDA share two fundamental understandings about human communication: (1) it is always multimodal. Thus, when we make meaning, we select from different modes (e.g., writing, sound, visual design) and media (e.g., face to face, print, film), and we combine these choices according to the logic of space (e.g., a sculpture), time (e.g., a soundtrack), or both (e.g., a film) (Kress 2010). And (2) it is always social and can transform, and at the same time be transformed by, its social context (Djonov and Zhao 2014, p. 1).

Van Leeuwen (2013) has argued that CMDA has not yet established itself as a field with a “clear academic identity of its own [and] its own conferences, journals, edited books and so on” (p. 1). Recently, scholars in the field are attempting to move toward this goal, and there appears to be a push to include the combination of multimodality and CDA into many different disciplines and academic journals such as seen in the recent special issue of *CDS* (edited by Machin 2013); in the field of education and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) (Rogers and Mosley-Wetzel 2013; TESOL *Quarterly* special issue due Autumn 2015, edited by Paltridge and Mahboob); in studies of popular discourse (Djonov and Zhao 2014); *Language and Politics* (e.g., Richardson and Colombo 2013); a textbook on doing CMDA (Machin and Mayr 2012a; see also Machin 2007); and an upcoming book series on *Critical Discourse Studies* published by Bloomsbury. Thus, the coming ten years look promising as to the direction and further establishment of this new trend in CDA.

### 5.3 CDA and Cognitive Linguistics

Another trend in CDA has been its combination with cognitive linguistics (CogLing). Fauconnier and Turner (2002) define CogLing as a scholarly perspective on the study of language, conceptual systems, human cognition, and meaning construction (see also Hart 2010, p. 24). CogLing has been associated with scholars such as Lakoff (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987, 1991, 1993; Fillmore 1982; Langacker 1987, 1991, 2002, 2008; Talmy 1988, 2000; Fauconnier 1994, 1997, 1999; Fauconnier and Turner 2002; Kövecses 2000, 2006). It is concerned with how we make meaning of our world and how we define our everyday realities (Lakoff and

Johnson 1980, p. 3; Fauconnier and Turner 2002). Cognitive linguists believe that communication involves conceptual processes, and that language is based on the same system that we use in thought and action. Thus, linguistic structure provides us indirect access to those processes and that system and is in this sense a “window to the mind” (Fauconnier 1999, p. 96; Hart 2010, p. 72).

Although, as we saw above, van Dijk has explicitly addressed the role of social cognition in the socio-cognitive approach (1985b, 1985a, 1988b, 1993b, 1995) and in his recent work on context (2008, 2009b), none of the other mainstream approaches to CDA commonly use cognitive theories of language (Hart 2010). Some CDA scholars (such as Wodak) have noted that, in the past, cognitive theories of language have been largely excluded from CDA for unjustifiable reasons (2006) and Chilton (a cognitive linguist himself) has argued that CogLing has been underused in CDA and has not received enough attention in the literature (2005a). Recently, scholars have begun to counter the critique (Widdowson 2004) that CDA lacks a systematic linguistic analysis, or, as noted earlier, that SFL, which is favored by some in CDA, is inadequate for its needs (van Dijk 2008); and there are some who focus on the possibilities that a CDA and CogLing combination allows in analysis. Scholars such as Chilton (2005a), Koller (2005), Wodak (2006), Hart (2010, 2011), and Musolff (2012) have been some of the most outspoken advocates for this combination (and in particular, CDA and metaphor analysis).

While Paul Chilton is often cited as one of the founders of CDA, he “has never explicitly applied the term CDA to his own work on the discourse of politics and international relations” (cf. Chilton 1994a, b, 1996a, b, 2004, 2005a, b; Chilton and Lakoff 1995; Wodak and Meyer 2009b, p. 14), but he has participated in work with CDA scholars like Wodak, although typically as a critic of CDA (Chilton and Wodak (eds.) 2007; Wodak and Chilton 2007); and on his website he admits that he is (although somewhat reluctantly) part of the “CDA enterprise” (<http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/profiles/paul-chilton>). Chilton has recently (like Hart 2010) drawn on cognitive evolutionary psychology to ask whether there might exist an innate “critical instinct” and if so, what the role of CDA is (Chilton 2005a), a position which has been challenged by other CDA researchers (van Dijk 2007; Wodak 2007, 2009). Chilton’s argument is that the most fundamental issue is whether societies provide the freedom to enable the ‘critical instinct’ to operate (Wodak and Meyer 2009b, p. 14). His more recent work (Chilton 2007) could be described as “comparative discourse analysis that crosses linguistic, cultural and political boundaries” (Wodak and Meyer 2009b, p. 14), and it is largely concerned with universal aspects of language and the human mind, integrating cognitive linguistics into CDA and attempting to address his own critiques about CDA work. Chilton’s forthcoming book *Language and Critique: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis* will take up some of the points raised in his (2005a) paper, “Missing Links in Mainstream CDA,” as well as new issues related to the global scholarly environment and what is meant by “critical.” The book will also draw on discourse ethics to address philosophical issues, new ideas in critical social theory, and moral philosophy (Chilton 2014).

Wodak has argued that cognitive theories have been unnecessarily excluded from CDA research, and, in her 2006 article on the assessment of cognitive approaches in

CDA, she provides clear examples of how she has applied these theories to her own work on immigration and asylum policies (van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999; Wodak and van Dijk 2000; Reisigl and Wodak 2001), demonstrating the explanatory power of CogLing and advocating strongly for the integration of the analysis of cognition into CDA. Koller acknowledges this “integrating trend” (2005) suggesting some new aspects for possible links between cognitive theories and CDA that focus on elaborations of traditional research on metaphors, on the one hand, and on social aspects of discourse, on the other (Wodak 2006). Koller argues that even though cognitive processes cannot be studied directly, the same seems to be true for ideologies and, therefore, we cannot discount the usefulness of these theories. Koller and Davidson (2008) provide a good example of a critical cognitive approach to the analysis of social exclusion in British policy making. Musolff underscores the importance of metaphor analysis in unmasking racist ideology in discourse, pointing out “the argumentative advantage that metaphor gives its users when they want to (dis-)qualify political developments, social groups or even individuals as threatening the identity or continued existence of a nation state” and thus metaphor’s relevance to CDA (2012, p. 303). Moreover, he demonstrates the usefulness of critical metaphor theories as a fundamental means of concept and argument building, incorporating a modified cognitive approach informed by relevance theory within CDA (p. 303).

This trend of integrating CogLing into CDA through critical metaphor research (and often incorporating corpus approaches as well) has been highly successful and numerous publications have occurred since Charteris-Black first introduced the term “critical metaphor analysis” in 2004. Some examples of other publications featuring this approach (and spanning disciplines) include Chilton (1994a, b, 1996a, b), Chilton and Lakoff (1995), Santa Ana (1999, 2002, 2013), El Refaie (2001), Koller (2004, 2005), Musolff (2004, 2006, 2007, 2010), Charteris-Black (2006, 2014), Goatly (2007), Maalej (2007), and Nordensvard 2013). Critical metonymy analysis has recently taken an equal place with metaphor in the integration of cognitive linguistic theories into CDA and several publications which feature analysis of metonymy (uniquely or in addition to metaphor) have emerged in the past few years, including critical multimodal analysis of metonymy (Meadows 2007; Portero-Muñoz 2011; Riad and Vaara 2011; Catalano and Waugh 2013a, b; Catalano and Moeller 2013; Velázquez 2013). These types of analyses (like those concerned with metaphor) expose the use of metonymy as a tool of persuasion and manipulation, and add more depth, resulting in a more detailed and systematic analysis.

Although much work has been done combining CDA with CogLing and critical metaphor/metonymy analysis, Hart (2010, 2011) believes that CogLing has much more to offer CDA analysts. One major contribution which he feels has not been fully utilized is the new perspectives it can offer on objects of analysis, such as the use of a passive sentence without the agent, through profiling, backgrounding and metonymy (Hart 2011). In addition, Hart believes that the theory of force dynamics (Talmy 1988, 2000), which refers to how entities react with respect to force, is useful in understanding and explaining our “conceptualisations of physical interactions but also, by metaphorical extension, social, psychological, political, legal and

linguistic interactions,” particularly in discourse related to immigration (Hart 2011, p. 273). Besides force dynamics, Hart also encourages the use of other cognitive linguistics theories in addition to conceptual metaphor theory such as mental spaces theory (Fauconnier 1994, 1997), conceptual blending theory (Fauconnier and Turner 1996, 2002), and cognitive grammar (Langacker 1987, 1991, 2002, 2008; Hart 2010, p. 25).

#### 5.4 *CDA and Critical Applied Linguistics*

There are many different definitions of AL and since it is not our purpose here to resolve the issue of what AL is, we will quote three fairly short ones. Richards et al. (1985, p. 15) define AL as “the study of second and foreign language learning and teaching” and “the study of language and linguistics in relation to practical problems, such as lexicography, translation, speech pathology, etc.” Brumfit (1997, p. 93) defines AL as “the theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue.” And Schmitt and Celce-Murcia (2002, p. 1) offer the following definition: “Applied Linguistics is using what we know about (a) language, (b) how it is learned, and (c) how it is used, in order to achieve some purpose or solve some problem in the real world.” AL is an interdisciplinary field that draws on linguistics, sociolinguistics, education, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, to name a few.

According to Pennycook, the first to coin the term Critical AL (1990; CritAL), CritAL goes beyond the concept of AL to take an “anti-disciplinary” (1997), critical approach to the study of language that emphasizes making AL matter, and remaking the connections between discourse, language learning, language use, and the social and political contexts in which these occur. This approach is derived from a theory that critically analyzes the social, cultural, economic, and political ways in which people are inequitably positioned. Moreover, Pennycook points out, CritAL draws on a variety of critical approaches to develop an understanding of the relationship between language, culture, and discourse, and a belief that research needs to focus on an analysis of the micropolitics of everyday life. Some examples of these critical approaches include CDA, CL, critical sociolinguistics, critical anthropology, critical literacy, critical pedagogy, Marxian structuralist analyses of society, studies in political economy, and theories of imperialism (1997, pp. 23–24).

Pennycook (1997, p. 25) also posits that CritAL should explore not only “questions of language and inequality” but also should attempt to “change those conditions.” Thus, it should be seen as a way of thinking and doing that is always problematizing. In fact, Pennycook (2004) explains that he sees CritAL as a dynamic, constantly shifting approach to language in multiple contexts, rather than a method, a set of techniques, or a sum of related critical approaches to language domains. In his own words, this approach is not only the addition of a critical dimension to applied linguistics but rather opens up a whole new array of questions and concerns, issues such as identity, sexuality, access, ethics...or the reproduction of Otherness

that have hitherto not been considered as concerns related to applied linguistics (pp. 803–804).

CritAL examines inequality in terms of relating micro-relations of AL to macro-relations of social and political power. In this vein, CritAL empowers applied linguists in the sense that it enables them to make the connection between discourse, language learning, language teaching, language use, and the social and political contexts in which these processes take place. Some examples of CritAL studies include Kubota (1999) and Martinez (2003).

## 6 Other Trends

As said above, we will treat, in this section, transdisciplinary trends in CDA that we feel should be mentioned—such as rhetoric, education, anthropology/ethnography, sociolinguistics, culture, feminist gender studies, and corpus linguistics, but we do not have the space or time—or expertise, in some cases—to deal with them in much detail.

### 6.1 *CDA and Rhetoric*

Some rhetorical scholars have expanded the scope of their research to examine the relationship between style, ideology, and subjectivity (Carpenter 1994; Hariman 1995; Ritivoi 2008). The investigation of style through a CDA framework not only departs from the classical, rhetorical conception that regards style as attractive verbal garb, but also highlights the importance of style as a generative tool in the construction of subjectivities and ideologies. By studying the ideological dimensions of style, rhetoricians have broadened their analytical and methodological repertoire through incorporating critical, interdisciplinary approaches to discourse that are empirical, ethnographic, and grounded, and thereby “data-driven rather than theory-driven” (Johnstone 2008, pp. 3–4).

The study of style from a CDA perspective has informed the works of rhetorical scholars who seek to unveil the workings of political legitimization and representation through discourse. Ritivoi (2008) expands upon the rhetorical study of style by examining the ways in which Cold War refugees, through a series of stylistic choices, not only exploit dominant anticommunist ideology but also construct an ethos that legitimizes their status as political representatives; this stylistic self-fashioning of a political ethos enabled Cold War refugees to effectively lobby for their political and national interests. Ritivoi (2008) studies Visoianu’s use of modality and transitivity to illustrate how he asserted his political ethos as representative of Romanian refugees and to portray them as a united front collectively reacting against communism. The critical examination of entextualization and transitivity,



furthermore, plays a critical role in understanding how situations are scripted and blame is apportioned, especially in studies of governmental documents that seek to manipulate public opinion of important social events (Eisenhart 2008).

Since the time of its development, rhetoric has expanded its disciplinary scope, and scholarship in rhetoric and composition has emerged that critically addresses, among other areas, race and racism (Villanueva 1993; Clary-Lemmon 2009; Martinez 2009), sexism (Marinara et al. 2009), technology and literacies of technology (Hawisher and Selfe 1991; Hawisher et al. 2004), and the ideology of writing (Berlin 1988). Scholars in rhetoric and composition are incorporating empirically based research methodologies to inform their work, looking at ways in which interdisciplinary approaches, such as CDA, enrich the field; CDA brings to rhetoric/composition the explicit issue of power inherent in discourses, enables researchers to analyze both macro and micro discursive practices, and “facilitates the parallel analysis of” multiple forms of text (Huckin et al. 2012, p. 111).

## 6.2 *CDA and Education*

Another discipline that has incorporated the use of CDA into its analysis is that of education. The work of Freire on critical pedagogy is well known, but it did not focus on language per se. Early examples of linguistic analysis in education (such as Cazden 2001) were used to make sense of the ways in which people make meaning in educational contexts (Rogers et al. 2005, p. 366). Since the late 1990s, educational researchers have increasingly engaged in CDA to answer questions about the relationships between language and society, and, as they do so, they are showing the applicability of CDA to education and at the same time continually reshaping the boundaries of CDA (Rogers et al. 2005). The wide use of CDA in educational research is due perhaps to the compatibility of CDA and education in many areas. For example, if one considers educational practices to be communicative events, then it is easy to understand how Fairclough’s approach to CDA (2011) can be useful in examining the ways in which text, talk, and other semiotic interactions involved in learning are constructed in varying contexts (Rogers 2011b, p. 1). Discourse studies are also useful in education because they provide a way of conceptualizing interactions that is compatible with the sociocultural perspective of Vygotsky (1962, 1978; see Wertsch 1985; Lantolf and Thorne 2006) in educational research (Moll 1990, 2014; Gutiérrez 2008; Lewis et al. 2007), and they allow for the interpretation of multimodal social practices such as those found in education (Rogers 2011a, b, p. 1).

In addition, CDA and educational research are both committed to addressing problems through a range of theoretical perspectives. Many of the problems in the globalized world system of education have to do with power and inequality, and CDA is particularly equipped with the tools needed to address these issues and the complex movement across educational sites, practices, and systems in a world of global inequalities (Rogers 2011a, b, p. 1; Collins 2011). As more and more

educational researchers adapt CDA tools to their research, “interesting and substantive concerns arise about how it is applied to educational issues, how it affects other research and approaches in education, and how it might be reviewed in the non-educational research traditions from which it came” (Rogers et al. 2005, p. 366).

In order to gain a complete understanding of the range of areas and topics explored in the educational realm in which CDA is employed as an analytic tool, Rogers (2011) provides an excellent overview and opening chapter (Rogers 2011b) explaining the link between CDA and education, and all of the chapters in this book explore different facets of education from a CDA perspective, from which we will discuss four. Gee (2011a), on what makes discourse analysis critical, calls his approach critical discourse analysis (uncapitalized), to differentiate it from capitalized CDA, since for him critical discourse analysis “argues that language-in-use is always part and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, specific social practices, and that social practices always have implications for inherently political things like status, solidarity, the distribution of social goods, and power” (p. 28; also 31–32). Fairclough contributed a chapter (2011) on the semiotic aspects of social transformation and learning and thereby addresses a gap both in CDA in general and in his own work in particular: Questions of learning, which he approaches from the fundamental question of the “performativity of texts” and uses the term “semiosis” “to refer in a general way to language and other semiotic modes such as visual image” (p. 119). Kress’s chapter (2011) is a multimodal social semiotic approach to education (see also Kress and van Leeuwen 1996/2006; Kress and van Leeuwen 2001 and our discussion above of Social Semiotics and multimodality). And Lewis and Ketter (2011) focus on learning as social interaction and on the “nature of learning over time among members of [a] study group”, p. 128). In addition, on the website constructed in 2004 for the first edition of the book (<http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415874298/>; Rogers 2011 is the second edition), there is a long bibliography (up to 2004) that includes syllabi from each of the authors for courses in CDA and education. The site also lists journals dedicated to the study of discourse, language, talk, and text (many of which feature articles that relate to educational issues, such as *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, *Journal of Classroom Interaction*, *Language and Education*, *Linguistics and Education*, *Classroom Discourse*, and *TESOL Quarterly*). To view more examples of CDA work in the field of education, see the following articles: Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004; foreign language learning), Richardson (2007; family and community literacies), Taylor (2008; adult literacy), Rogers and Mosley (2008) and Masuda (2012; teacher education), Belluigi (2009; art education); Lam (2009 and Anderson and Wales 2012; digital studies), Medina (2010 and Lau 2013; biliteracy), and Takayama (2009; race, culture, ethnicity).

### 6.3 CDA and Anthropology/Ethnography

Although critical approaches have been employed in ethnographic studies in anthropology that examine the discourses of, e.g., immigrants’ rights to health (Willen

2011), drug addiction and subjectivity (Prussing 2008), corporate manipulation and health policies (Ortanez and Glantz 2009) and local policies regarding water distribution (Ennis-McMillan 2001), little attention has been paid to the connections that tie research practices of CDA and ethnography (although see Wodak on DHA, discussed above).

In order to address the problem of ethnographic context, studies connecting ethnography with CDA have emerged in response to the need for an examination of how social relations are reproduced and inequalities perpetuated through discourse by social actors in their immediate social context. Such studies produce a richly contextualized, critical analysis of institutional discourse and practices that is often absent in traditional CDA work. In her ethnographic study, Rogers (2002), for instance, reveals a series of institutional contradictions and practices by the Committee on Special Education that discursively construct disability in such a way that disallows minoritized people from entering mainstream educational classrooms. Because of these contradictions, “the study of disability from an anthropological perspective should include attention to shifts and changes across discourses, context, and time” (Rogers 2002, p. 233). A critical analysis of discourse in ethnographic research undergirds the importance of considering the ever-shifting role of context and discourse in serving the hegemonic apparatus.

Other anthropological studies that combine ethnographic methodologies with CDA have investigated the impact of workplace discourse on social actors’ perceptions. In her ethnographic study of the “Sigma Corporation,” Wasson (2004) applies CDA methods to examine enterprise language and its associated ideologies. The use of enterprise language—marketplace metaphors such as buy-in, taking ownership, and customer—by corporate employees shape corporate managers’ perceptions of employees’ subjectivity and define workplace relationships. Employees who fail to navigate the complexities associated with the use of enterprise language are afforded no respect, for their failure betrays their lack of understanding and commitment to corporate ideologies (Wasson 2004).

In the wake of criticism against CDA for its problem of context, scholars have offered ethnographic methodologies as a potential corrective to address this criticism. Blommaert, for instance, finds that CDA’s linguistically orientated research practices can benefit from these methodologies. As he (2001) says, “CDA is still burdened by a very “linguistic” outlook, which prevents productive ways of incorporating linguistic and non-linguistic dimensions of semiosis[...]. Here as well, an ethnographically informed stance, in which linguistic practice is embedded in more general patterns of human meaningful action, could be highly productive” (p. 461). Recent studies that productively marry CDA and ethnography have emerged, e.g., the 2011 special issue “Ethnography and Critical Discourse Analysis” of *Critical Discourse Studies*, one of many attempts to redress this issue by discussing a wide range of ethnographic studies employing CDA methods, e.g., mental health (Galasinski 2011), language policies (Johnson 2011), organizational practices and identities (Krzyzanski 2011), and internal guidelines in shaping news narratives (Barkho 2011). The contributors to this special issue recognize the indispensable link between ethnography and CDA in contributing to a fuller analysis of societal issues.

Other recent work that incorporates an ethnographic approach includes Machin and Mayr's (2007) critical analysis of the *Leicester Mercury* in which the editor is interviewed in order to enrich the textual analysis by investigating the processes that lie behind the production of (newspaper) texts (p. 217). In addition, Benwell's (2005) study of male readers' responses to men's magazines provides a good example of how unstructured interviews can complement a critical multimodal analysis. Finally, Meadows (2009) incorporates "ethnographically sensitive" CDA to examine how the relationship between nationalism and language learning is manifested in an English language classroom along the Mexico/US border.

#### 6.4 CDA and Sociolinguistics

The relationship between discourse analysis and sociolinguistics is so close that for many American, British, and Australian scholars, DA (sometimes including CDA), is seen as a subcategory of sociolinguistics; indeed, Boxer (2002, p. 7) says that "CDA is the quintessential applied sociolinguistics, as its goal is to transform societal values through the exposing of harmful ways of speaking." There are quite a few books on sociolinguistics, for example, that include sections or chapters on DA (e.g., Hudson 1996; McKay and Hornberger 1996; Cheshire and Trudgill 1998; Downes 1998; Boxer 2002; Hornberger and McKay 2010; Deckert and Vickers 2011). Many of the themes that sociolinguists have been concerned with have been taken up in CDA work, since it shares with sociolinguistics the assumption that language use should be studied in a social context (e.g., Duranti and Goodwin 1992). Therefore, CDA often employs sociolinguistic methods for examining the linguistic features of different types of discourse units and the way those discourse units are tied together to create meaning. CDA concerns itself with critically examining the social context in which interaction occurs in order to understand and interpret its meaning within that particular social context. In the same manner, there has always been much work in sociolinguistics that has both the intention and frequently the effect of making change in social practices. Similar concerns about language and social history have yielded an innovative body of work in sociolinguistics (about, e.g., race, ethnicity, immigrant status, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc.). For example, an issue that has gained prominence in sociolinguistic research is that of inequality and the positioning of individuals and groups in contemporary social and political hierarchies. Hymes's (1969a, b) edited "Pantheon antitextbook" called *Reinventing Anthropology* contains an introduction on "The Use of Anthropology: Critical, Political, Personal" and sections with articles by noted anthropologists on "studying dominated cultures," "studying the cultures of power," "responsibilities of ethnography," and "critical traditions" (the latter including a chapter by Scholte "Towards a Reflexive and Critical Anthropology"). Hymes' (1996) critical essays on education and narrative reopened debates on the allocation of speaking rights and linguistic-communicative resources, and argued forcefully for more attention to communicative inequalities in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics.

Though Hymes never used the term CDA, his work fits right in the heart of this field. Scholars like Blommaert and Hornberger, among others, have focused on reviving Hymes' work and shedding light on its critical analysis. Blommaert (2009) posits that whenever we read Hymes, it becomes obvious that "most of his oeuvre... can be read as a political statement [and] an attempt toward a critical science of language in social life" (p. 257). The idea that differences in language use contribute to social discrimination and actual inequality is central in Hymes' work. For example, Hymes (1996) states that "[t]he study of language... became a self-conscious activity, and to a great extent has developed, as an instrument of exclusion and domination" (p. 6). It is Hymes' focus on context, language, and culture, speech, and social life that makes him one of the main figures in CDA. Hornberger (2011) points out that "language inequality is an enduring theme of Hymes's work (1980, 1996) and his vision of the role of language in achieving—and denying—social justice in and out of schools shines clearly in all of his essays" (p. 317). It is for these reasons that Blommaert goes on to state that Hymes's work "was a critical discourse analysis long before anyone laid claim to that term" (2009, p. 273). Some recent examples of sociolinguistic studies merging with CDA include Achugar (2007, 2008) and Velázquez (2008, 2009, 2013).

## 6.5 CDA and Culture

There are many cultural approaches to the study of discourse. In the field of pragmatics, intercultural pragmatics (Kecskes 2014) is the best equipped to deal with the concept of "culture" and differs from mainstream pragmatics in its multilingual, socio-cognitive and discourse-segment (as opposed to utterance) perspective. Intercultural pragmatics focuses on how language systems are put to use in intercultural encounters to co-construct conventions and norms of communality resulting in a "shift of emphasis from the communal to the individual" (although both are considered important; p. 6). In linguistic anthropology, Keating and Duranti (2011) deal with culture and discourse with the basic assumption that "human discourse is a resource for language users to work out who they are, what they are up against, and what is worth pursuing in life," hence discourse is "what makes human cultures possible and unique" (p. 331). In this view, discourse and culture mutually constitute one another and "culture is to a great extent, a discursive project" (p. 353).

The critique of CDA has often held that CDA does not take into account the existence of non-Western cultural concepts, theory and approaches, nor has it considered its own cultural limitations and biases (Shi-xu 2012; see also Sect. 4.1). Examining the meaning of CDA in Chinese, Zhang et al. (2011) propose that the concept and practice of "critical" can be problematic when crossing cultural, social, and political boundaries. Recently, the *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* (established in 2006 by founding editor Shi-xu) has created a space to advance the agenda of cultural approaches in discourse research, responding to critiques such as the one mentioned above that accuses much of CDA scholarship of being "Western-centric,"

adapting a “conception of values as if they were universal” and “adjudicating other cultural communities, governments or institutions” (Shi-xu 2012, p. 485). Hence, this journal has focused on “non-Western data, theories and methods, marginalized, disadvantaged, and developing discourse communities, with a particular focus on Asian, African, and Latin American cultures” (Scollo 2011, p. 1).

In her 2011 article, Scollo outlines three different approaches to culturally inclusive discourse research including Blommaert’s (2005) culturally inclusive approach to CDA (based in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics), Shi-xu’s (2005) cultural approach to discourse (now renamed cultural discourse studies, as in Shi-xu (2012) and Carbaugh’s (2005, 2007, 2010a, 2010b) cultural discourse theory. According to Scollo (2011), Blommaert’s approach (2005, pp. 14–15) avoids universalist positions and focuses analysis on what language use means to its users, how language operates differently in different environments, and how we must conceive of communication as influenced by the structure of the world system (Blommaert 2005, pp. 14–15).

Shi-xu’s research program represents a more “culturally nuanced way of doing discourse studies,” is more open to multiple viewpoints, and positions itself “between cultures” to examine power relations (Shi-xu 2005, p. 5, 2012, p. 485). In addition, proponents of cultural discourse studies argue for a “culturally conscious and reflexive approach beyond the discipline’s taken-for-granted multi-disciplinarity, moral stance and monologue” aiming to generate research innovation and “cultural equality and prosperity” (Shi-xu 2012, p. 484). Carbaugh’s approach, cultural discourse theory, was developed within the ethnography of communication program, and has been described in detail in Carbaugh’s latest works (2005, 2007, 2010a, b; see also Scollo 2011, p. 18). Those interested in learning more about this approach and conducting cultural discourse analysis can read *Talking American* (1988), Carbaugh’s first book, which includes an excellent example of an interpretive analysis in this frame (See also Carbaugh’s chapter in the present volume).

Theoretical research on culture as a key reference point in the construction of discourse has become popular in the past few years; and in the transdisciplinary movement of CDA/CDS, Gavriely-Nuri’s cultural approach to CDA (CCDA) has been a leader in explicitly connecting CDA to culture. According to Gavriely-Nuri (2010b), CCDA is the systematic and explicit analysis of the cultural “toolkit” by which people construct discursive strategies, and a methodology that seeks to explore the various ways by which culture contributes to the reproduction of power abuse and domination (pp. 567–568). CCDA is employed to decode cultural elements within discourse referred to as the “cultural code,” a network of shared values, norms and beliefs that construct a community’s beliefs (Bar-Tal 2000; Gavriely-Nuri 2010b). CCDA seeks to expose the “global dictionary of power and manipulation,” e.g., expressions such as “war on terror” and Bourdieu’s ideas are appropriated and expanded to include new proposals, such as “discursive capital,” the goal of which is to expose how “cultural codes can be perceived as a part of the discursive capital of a certain cultural community” (Gavriely-Nuri 2012, p. 82). In addition, CCDA aims to uncover cultural and cross-cultural aspects of discourse adopting tools from cultural studies, such as the heuristic of decoding cultural codes, intertextuality, and re-

contextualization, and combining this with CDA's systematic and explicit analysis of structures and strategies of text and talk (Gavriely-Nuri 2010b, p. 568). CCDA is applicable to a range of discourses and cultures and enables comparative research, while at the same time being sensitive to the uniqueness of specific discourses. For examples of CCDA, see Gavriely-Nuri's work on metaphors and cultural codes in the Israeli peace process (2010a), the discourse of peace (2012), and the normalization of war and collective memory (2013, 2014).

It is clear from this brief summary of cultural approaches to CDA that there exists a wide range of conceptions, theories, and methods to choose from that take into account both critical and cultural perspectives. While we do not claim to have covered all of these cultural approaches to CDA, we hope to have introduced the most prominent and most explicitly connected to CDA/CDS. In addition, while we have introduced these approaches separately, it is clear that, as is the case for many other areas of CDA, there is much overlap, and each "brings significant features of discourse and its analysis into view and all can benefit from each other" (Scollo 2011, p. 19).

## 6.6 *Feminist CDA: Gender and Discourse*

As we noted in the Introduction to this chapter, the topic of gender (and sex) is on the agenda for work in CDA. The pioneers of CDA and the many scholars who joined the trend in its various manifestations have all been aware, in one way or another, of work on gender in sociolinguistics and other allied fields, including DA. Work in sociolinguistics and DA typically focused (especially in the beginning) on the speech behavior of men and women on the phonological level, and on interactions (conversational styles) between women and men (see Wodak 1997a, b). The best known examples of work in this domain are based on a quantitative–correlational approach, with a focus on urban groups (see the early work of e.g., Labov 1966a, b; Trudgill 1972, 1974; Milroy and Milroy 1978). However, from a CDA perspective, as said above, in the very early work by the critical linguists, in Fairclough's article (1985) on descriptive versus critical goals in discourse analysis, as well as in the section on CDA and sociolinguistics in this chapter, many in CDA have seen sociolinguistic work as too descriptive and not critical (enough). Thus, from at least the 1990s, there have been critical discussions of sociolinguistic gender studies (see, e.g., Cameron 1990; Cameron and Coates 1990; Coates 1993; Wodak and Benke 1996; Kotthoff and Wodak 1997; Wodak 1997a, b).

Gender is treated as another category for classifying people/groups alongside race/ethnicity, religion, class, socioeconomic status (SES), educational background, etc., all of which also call out for critical work. This tendency toward descriptive work has led to research on feminism and linguistic theory (Cameron 1992), feminist stylistics (Mills 1995), feminist pragmatics (Christie 2000), and feminist conversation analysis (Kitzinger 2000), which have pointed to the bias of these (sub) disciplines toward supposedly neutral and objective inquiry, which is often impli-

cated in patriarchal ideology and oppression and which does not address the issue of “relations of power that systematically privilege men as a social group and disadvantage, exclude and disempower women as a social group” (Lazar 2005b, p. 5).

However, CDA is different, given its overtly political stance and its concern with all types of social inequality and injustice. And, as Lazar points out (2005b, p. 1): “a critical perspective on unequal social arrangements sustained through language use, with the goals of social transformation and emancipation, constitutes the cornerstone of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and many feminist language studies”. Thus, they share much in common. And it could also be claimed (van Dijk 1991b; see Lazar 2005b, p. 2) that feminist approaches in women’s studies provided an impetus in the 1980s for CL and ultimately for CDA.

However, much critical work on gender and discourse is not presented as CDA, and one could understand (Lazar 2005b) that feminists feel comfortable working in CDA (without needing to explicitly name, or talk about, their feminist perspective). In this connection, we can cite prolific work by Wodak from both her pre-CDA period and after the founding of CDA (1983, 1984, 1985a, 1986, 1987, 1996, 1997a; Wodak 1997b; Wodak et al. 1987, 1989, 1999; Wodak and Benke 1996; Kotthoff and Wodak 1997). In discussing the vast literature in the domain of gender and discourse/sociolinguistics, Wodak (1997a) notes the “many contradictory approaches, assumptions, and results” (p. 1), and argues for a critical approach to the literature itself. She says that the many empirical studies that exist have neglected the context of language behavior and have analyzed gender by looking at biological sex, making hasty generalizations about genderlects. She proposes “a context-sensitive approach which regards gender as a social construction...in connection with the socio-cultural and ethnic background of the interlocutors, and in connection with their age, their level of education, their socio-economic status, their emotions and the specific power-dynamics of the discourse investigated” (p. 2). Her 1997 edited volume on gender and discourse contains chapters by some of the best known (feminist) linguists/discourse analysts of that time working on language (e.g., Holmes 1997; Cameron 1997; Kendall and Tannen 1997; McElhinny 1997; Coates 1997).

Thus, feminist CDA had existed for a long time, but, as a body of research, it has not been sufficiently recognized, since it is dispersed across a variety of journals (like *D&S*, *CDS*, and other journals open to critical work and/or feminist work) and various edited volumes on gender and language. And, as we have seen, there are many overviews about CDA—and there are also many about feminist language studies—but the two together have received only brief mention (e.g., Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Wodak 1997a; Cameron 1998); and even when feminist scholarship in CDA has been discussed, the scope has been narrow and limited (see Bucholtz 2003). This has led to a call for an overtly feminist CDA (Lazar 2005b).

Another reason why there has been a trend to an explicitly feminist CDA is that most of the studies in CDA with a gender focus adopt a critical feminist view of gender relations and are motivated by the need for social change and social justice, for a politically invested program of discourse analysis with social emancipatory goals with respect to *gender*. In addition, Cameron (1998, pp. 969–970) argues that CDA “is one of those broadly progressive projects whose founders and dominant



figures are nevertheless all straight white men". This is not accurate, as we have seen, given the prominence of Ruth Wodak in the founding and continuing development of CDA, but it is true that, by far, the majority of the founding figures and major contributors to CDA are white men and, according to Wilkinson and Kitzinger (1995), they have tended not to give credit to feminists by citing their work.

Besides Wodak and van Dijk, there is work in CDA that draws on feminist sources (see Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999), but Lazar argues (2005b, p. 3) that citations are not enough, what is needed is to "theorise and analyse the particularly insidious and oppressive nature of gender as an omni-relevant category in most social practices." Naming the trend "feminist CDA" means that the women (and men) who practice this will develop a sense of group membership and visibility, and will be given a voice in what is now mainstream CDA—which, ironically, would give the self-naming a political function and raise self-reflexivity. And finally, the trend within CDA to look at both text and talk is an important contribution to feminist work on language and discourse; and the multimodal/semiotic dimensions of CDA discussed above make for an enriching and insightful analysis. Thus, "a multimodal view of discourse has great value for a holistic feminist critique of discursive constructions of gender" (Lazar 2005b, p. 5), as in CCDA.

Moreover, as Lazar points out (2005b, p. 24), her book (2005a) is the first international collection of work on CDA and feminist work, especially studies of language. She is quick to say that one cannot speak of men and women in universalizing terms, since gender as a social identity intersects with other types of culturally determined and shifting social identities such as, e.g., sexuality, ethnicity, social position and geography, to name a few. She also underscores the fact that the "workings of gender ideology and asymmetrical power relations in discourse are assuming more subtle forms" (2005b, p. 1) in the twenty-first century, especially as we look at the taken-for-granted social assumptions and hegemonic power relations in news and advertising, educational settings, workplaces, institutions of various sorts, and governments and transnational organizations. Her book is centered on "Post-Equality? Analyses of Subtle Sexism" and "Emancipation and Social Citizenship: Analysis of Identity and Difference" (2005b, p. v) and includes chapters by Holmes (2005), Wodak (2005), Lazar (2005c), and Talbot (2005).

It is clear from this brief summary of feminist approaches to CDA that there exists a vast literature in this domain which is not recognized as such, but that there is, at the same time, a desire on the part of many to create this new subarea of CDA. While we do not claim to have covered all of the feminist approaches to CDA, we hope to have given the reader some understanding of work in this area.

## 6.7 *CDA and Corpus Studies*

The integration of CDA with corpus studies research has come about in response to the critique that CDA lacks quantitative and comparative methods (Machin and Mayr 2012a, p. 216). Thus, the introduction of corpus techniques (largely taken

from corpus linguistics) into CDA helps to address the problem of the representativeness of the samples of language analyzed and the need to check the hypotheses developed in qualitative analysis against empirically verifiable data (p. 216). Stubbs (1996) and Baker (2006) each give an excellent introduction to corpus linguistics and also explore its value for DA. Charteris-Black's work (2004, 2006, 2014; cited above in the CogLing discussion since he does critical metaphor analysis) is based on a corpus linguistic approach. In it, he explains why a corpus should be used (in analyzing metaphor) and how it can be used. Baker and McEnery (2005) provide a good example of a combination of CDA and corpus linguistics in their corpus analysis of newspaper texts to examine the discursive construction of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK (see also Baker et al. 2008; Khosravini 2010).

Mautner's chapter in Wodak and Krzyzanowski's (2008) edited book on *Qualitative Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences*, deals with the analysis of newspapers, magazines, and other print media using both a CDA and a corpus linguistic approach and is an excellent discussion of how to combine both qualitative and quantitative methods and methodologies. She illustrates how to put together what some have called a "small corpus," given the qualitative nature of much CDA research. Based on Bauer and Aarts (2000, pp. 31–34), she outlines a cyclical (rather than a random) method of sampling (Mautner 2008, p. 35) or, alternatively, a top-down approach (p. 36) leading to a "specialized, topic-oriented and diachronic corpus (see Baker 2006, pp. 26–29)." She says that the use of these techniques balances subjective judgment with "rigour and choices exposed to critical scrutiny. The key correctives are transparency and accountability" (Mautner 2008, p. 37). She then lays out the components of an analytical toolkit, using traditional aspects of both CDA and corpus linguistics. For example, she suggests that the connotative meaning (evaluative load) of words, which CDA analysts often work with and is widely shared in a speech community (Stubbs 2001, p. 35), can be easily checked by taking a word like "undesirables" and getting comparative evidence from a reference corpus, such as the British National Corpus (for British English). With the types of software available to deal with corpora with multimillions of words, it is relatively fast and easy to find out what the shared connotations are (Mautner 2008, p. 45). In this way, analysts can put their judgment of evaluation in perspective and make sure they do not over- or under-interpret (O'Halloran and Coffin 2004).

Mautner also suggests that the typical corpus linguistic technique of finding the collocations that a word normally occurs in, which gives it a "consistent aura of meaning" or "semantic prosody" (Louw 1993, p. 175), can be used in CDA. For example, for an expression like "rampant immigration," the researcher can use the British sections of Wordbanks Online (a multimillion word corpus) and find that, for "rampant," this aura is consistently negative, given the types of words it typically is used with (e.g., "commercialism," "consumerism," "materialism," "corruption," "inflation" (Mautner 2008, p. 45)). She further points out that an expression such as "ethnic diversity," which is an example of "nodes around which ideological battles are fought" (Stubbs 2001, p. 188; see also Mautner 2008, p. 46), can be either positive or negative, depending on who uses it and in what textual and political contexts. This necessitates going backwards and forwards in the text in order to

check “the dynamism of meaning-making as the text proceeds” (O’Halloran and Coffin 2004, p. 85), not only other words and expressions used in the text but also images, thereby incorporating critical multimodal discourse analysis as well. In the same way, Mautner’s (2010) book “Language and the Market Society” incorporates CDA and corpus linguistics to examine the marketization of language in various aspects of society. Finally, as mentioned in the Introduction, Kim (2014) investigates the way in which North Korea is constructed in the US media using a corpus-based approach that analyzes collocational patterns.

## 7 New Directions: Social Action for Social Justice

Although social action and social justice has been on the agenda since the beginning of CDA, and we have remarked on these issues when discussing the critique of CDA and various areas of CDA/CDS, they have been just mentioned or neglected for much of the history that we have traced here. Little actual work has been done. However, in response to the critique that CDA neglects practical concerns and agendas and does not result in real social change, some have adopted its use as a tool for social awareness, action, and transformation as opposed to its more theoretical focus. In this respect, the field of education has been most prominent and features articles such as Newfield (2011), in which a multimodal analysis is used to point out exactly how social justice education is implemented in South African schools in an attempt to spread this knowledge (and methodology) to other teachers in similar contexts in South Africa and around the world. Additionally, CDA, as a tool for social justice in education, incorporates many different disciplines within the field such as in Freitas and Zolkower’s (2009) study incorporating CDA (and social semiotics) to prepare mathematics teachers to teach for social justice by promoting their critical understanding of the symbolic domination work they often unknowingly perform and equipping them with tools for decoding the dominant discursive practices of mathematics. In addition to the field of education, CDA for social justice has incorporated studies aimed at exposing socially damaging practices of corporations and their executives, such as in Catalano and Waugh (2013b), which looks at financial discourse and the role of metonymy in shaping public opinion that often results in harmful government policies or laws (see also Saint 2008; Machin and Mayr 2012b). Charteris-Black (2004) argues that by changing the metaphors we use and by examining metaphors in a large corpus of language, “we may be in a position to *challenge* the metaphor and to propose an *alternative* way of thinking about the topic” (p. 251). Thus, he suggests that we not use sports metaphors in reporting on war and instead consider war as “illness,” and says that “metaphor both reflects and determines how we think and feel about the world and, therefore, understanding more about metaphor is an essential component of intellectual freedom” (p. 253). In the area of human rights violations, Anthonissen and Blommaert (2007) show how CDA can be used to tell the stories of oppressed people in South Africa who were (and many still are) voiceless and powerless, but whose stories have become

“important, relevant and instructive” due to massive and ongoing transformation in South African society. In addition, the following studies address issues of social justice and human rights in varying global contexts with the aim of social change: Achugar (2007, 2008), Catalano (2012, 2014), and Santa Ana (2013).

## 8 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have introduced the transdisciplinary research movement of CDA, defining it, and providing examples of recent CDA work. We have also provided an overview of different approaches, perspectives, and current trends as well as CDA's relation to pragmatics. In addition, we have reviewed some of its major critiques, such as the hesitancy to establish fixed epistemological and ontological foundations which in turn has led to insightful skepticism as to CDA's relevance to culture in general and social justice specifically. CDS and PDA approaches seek to take the schools of thought in broader and more positive directions, while turning the question of social justice on its head: Justice, per whom? Whose version of “right” and “wrong” are we adopting in order to emancipate oppressed groups? As Zhang et al. (2011) point out, “there is now a large amount of work using the label “CDA” emerging in other parts of the world, in other languages and under social and political conditions that are very different from those of liberal-democratic Europe” (p. 95). Perhaps in this new phase of CDA/CDS, we could most benefit from a basic common courtesy, Bakhtin's notion of *polyphony* (1984) as related to the metaphor of music: “In music, polyphony (and counterpoint) involves two or more different melodic lines which move and sound different from one another, but which, when heard as a whole, work together harmoniously.... There are different speakers, sometimes they clash (are dissonant), sometimes they are consonant (in agreement). But not any individual voice whatsoever will work harmoniously” (Zhang et al. 2011, p. 105). With this perspective in mind, we can envision many working together in the future for social change and social justice.

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# Pronouns and Neo-Gricean Pragmatics

Wayne A. Davis

**Abstract** Different forms of the personal pronouns have different constraints on their interpretations. Chomsky described such differences syntactically, in terms of binding rules. Levinson and Huang propose pragmatic accounts. They describe the differences as differences in implicature, and claim to derive them from the neo-Gricean Q-, I-, and M-principles. Some explanations invoke the disjoint reference presumption (DRP), which Huang and Levinson derive from the I-principle. Following in their footsteps but taking a different path, Ariel proposes pragmatic explanations in terms of her “functional principle,” which makes no reference to implicature, but does take expectations of conjoint or disjoint reference to be fundamental. I first consider these neo-Gricean accounts as synchronic explanations, arguing that they are unsuccessful for a variety of reasons. I conclude by considering whether the pragmatic principles instead explain pronominal differences diachronically. While more plausible, I present evidence that a diachronic account based on neo-Gricean principles is also unsuccessful.

**Keywords** Neo-Gricean pragmatics · Pronouns · Reflexives · The disjoint reference presumption · Binding rules

## 1 Introduction

Different forms of the personal pronouns have different constraints on their interpretations. In (1), for example, the reflexive *himself* must have *Hemingway* as its antecedent, but the nonreflexive *him* cannot.

- (1) (a) Hemingway shot himself.  
(b) Hemingway shot him.

Chomsky (1981, 1995) described such differences syntactically, in terms of binding rules. Levinson (1987, 1991, 2000) and Huang (1991, 2000, 2004, 2006b, 2010)

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propose pragmatic accounts. They describe the differences as differences in implicature, and claim to derive them from the neo-Gricean Q-, I-, and M-principles. As we will see, several different derivations have been proposed. Some involve the DRP, which Huang and Levinson derive from the I-principle. Following in their footsteps but taking a different path, Ariel (2008) proposes pragmatic explanations in terms of her “functional principle,” which makes no reference to implicature, but does take expectations of conjoint or disjoint reference to be fundamental.

I first consider these neo-Gricean accounts as synchronic explanations, arguing that they are unsuccessful for fundamental reasons. I conclude by considering whether the pragmatic principles instead explain pronominal differences diachronically. While more plausible, I present evidence that a diachronic account based on neo-Gricean principles is also unsuccessful.

Section 2 introduces Rules A and B, and the critical distinction between anaphoric linkage and referential identity. This section also identifies exceptions to the rules in English and other languages. We will evaluate how well the pragmatic accounts explain the data presented in this section. The full outline is as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Differences between reflexive and nonreflexive pronouns
3. Neo-Gricean pragmatics
4. The Q-account of Rule B
5. *⟨Himself, him⟩* as a Horn scale
6. Cancelability
7. The I-account of Rule B and the DRP
8. The I-account of Rule A
9. The M-account of Rule A
10. Ariel’s functional principle
11. Diachronic accounts
12. Conclusions

## 2 Differences Between Reflexive and Nonreflexive Pronouns

In contrast to (1), *Hemingway* can be the antecedent of *him* in (2)(b), but not of *himself* in (2)(a).

- (2) (a) John admired Hemingway. \*Mary admired himself too.  
 (b) John admired Hemingway. Mary admired him too.

Chomsky (1995, § 1.4.2) accounted for such facts in terms of syntactic rules:

**Rule A:** A reflexive pronoun must be bound in its local domain.

**Rule B:** A nonreflexive pronoun must be unbound in its local domain.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See also Lyons 1977, p. 667; Chomsky 1981, p. 188; Quirk et al. 1985, p. 356 ff.; Akmajian et al. 1990, § 5.4; Haspelmath 1997, p. 99 ff.; Comrie 1998; Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet

The local domain will be characterized here as the minimal governing<sup>2</sup> clause (including adjuncts<sup>3</sup>) or nominal phrase. The local domain is a nominal phrase<sup>4</sup> rather than a clause in (3):

- (3) (a) Hemingway loved *Fitzgerald's tribute to himself*.  
 (b) Hemingway loved *Fitzgerald's tribute to him*.

Hence, *himself* must be bound by *Fitzgerald* in (3)(a), not *Hemingway*. *Him* can be bound by *Hemingway* in (3)(b), but not *Fitzgerald*.

As Chomsky (1995, pp. 93–96) defines it,  $\alpha$  binds  $\beta$  only if they are “coindexed” or “coreferential.”<sup>5</sup> The binding conditions are thus sometimes formulated as saying: *A reflexive pronoun must corefer with an NP in its local domain, while a nonreflexive pronoun must not*. In its most common sense, adopted by Chomsky, “coreference” means *having the same referent*, which is a semantic notion.<sup>6</sup> In this sense, however, *Hemingway* and *him* may perfectly well be coreferential in (1)(b), if only by accident. This sentence would be fully grammatical if the speaker used *him* demonstratively while pointing at a picture of Hemingway (knowingly or unknowingly), or if *him* were anaphoric on *the author of For Whom the Bell Tolls* in another sentence. And on the natural interpretation of (4), *him* has the same referent as the second occurrence of *Hemingway*:

- (4) If everyone loves Hemingway, then even Hemingway must love him.

On the grammatical interpretation of (4), the pronoun is bound by the first occurrence of *Hemingway*, which is nonlocal.

Chomsky (1995, p. 96) initially defined coindexation as meaning *anaphoric linkage*.<sup>7</sup> A common index would thus indicate that one of the terms is the antecedent of the other. If two singular terms are anaphorically linked, then they have

2000: § 2.4; Huang 2000: § 2.1; 2006a, p. 232; Van Gelderen 2001, § 0.2; Sportiche 2003, p. 408; Lightfoot 2006, § 3.4; Ariel 2008, Chap. 6. Contrast Wiese 1983 p. 377 ff., 396. Chomsky used “anaphor” for reflexive pronouns, and “pronominal” or “pronoun” for nonreflexives.

<sup>2</sup> The difference between *John believes her to be smart* and *John believes that she is smart* is that *her* is governed by the main clause in the former (note the accusative marking) whereas *she* is governed by the subordinate clause in the latter (Chomsky 1995, p. 101).

<sup>3</sup> Reinhart and Reuland (1993) formulate the rules somewhat differently, in terms of whether a predicate’s co-arguments—excluding nominal phrases in adjuncts—must or must not be coindexed (see also Van Gelderen 2001, pp. 15–18; Ariel 2008, § 2.4).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Chomsky 1995, pp. 95, 101–104. By “nominal phrase” I mean a noun phrase that can occur as the subject or object of a verb. Thus, *the red book* and *red books* are nominal phrases, but not *red book*. On some analyses, nominal phrases are headed by determiners rather than nouns, and so are called determiner phrases.

<sup>5</sup>  $\alpha$  must also “c-command”  $\beta$ . If a phrase structure diagram is thought of as a family tree, a node c-commands any sibling node and all the sibling’s descendants.

<sup>6</sup> What is relevant for pronouns, of course, is having the same referent *on an occasion of use*, which is partly pragmatic (cf. Wiese 1983, p. 399).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Chierchia and McConnell Ginet (2000 p. 35), who note that “coreference” is often used by linguists with this sense (e.g., Saxena 2006, p. 131).

the same referent; but the converse fails.<sup>8</sup> While *Hemingway* and *him* may have the same referent in (1)(b), they cannot be anaphorically linked. *Him* can refer to Hemingway (the man) in (1)(b), but it cannot refer back to *Hemingway* (the name). The binding conditions must therefore be formulated as saying: *A reflexive pronoun must be anaphorically linked to an NP in its local domain, while the nonreflexive pronoun must not be*. Understood in these terms, the binding rules account for (4). It will be useful to indicate anaphoric links by superscripts, to distinguish them from the referential identities indicated by subscripts. Then the grammatical and ungrammatical readings of (1)(b) can be represented by (5), and those of (4) by (6):

- (5) (a) <sup>1</sup>Hemingway<sub>1</sub> shot <sup>2</sup>him<sub>1</sub>  
 (b) <sup>1</sup>Hemingway<sub>1</sub> shot <sup>2</sup>him<sub>2</sub>.  
 (b) \*<sup>1</sup>Hemingway<sub>1</sub> shot <sup>1</sup>him<sub>1</sub>.

- (6) (a) If everyone loves <sup>1</sup>Hemingway<sub>1</sub>, then even <sup>2</sup>Hemingway<sub>1</sub> must love <sup>1</sup>him<sub>1</sub>.  
 (b) \*If everyone loves <sup>2</sup>Hemingway<sub>1</sub>, then even <sup>1</sup>Hemingway<sub>1</sub> must love <sup>1</sup>him<sub>1</sub>.

In (6)(a), for example, the superscripts indicate that *him* is anaphoric on the first occurrence of *Hemingway* but not the second. In (6)(b), the reading is reversed. The distinction between coreference in general (having the same referent) and anaphoric coreference (having the same referent because of an anaphoric link) will be critical in what follows.

Rules A and B hold for a wide variety of syntactic structures in English and other languages. They do not hold for all personal pronouns, structures, or languages, however.

- Some languages allow nonreflexive pronouns to be bound in their local domain where English does not, as in this example from Piedmontese (Huang 2000, p. 22):

- (7) Giuanin a parla sempre d'chiel.  
 Giuanin CL-speak always of him  
 "Giuanin always talks about himself."

Some dialects of English allow nonreflexive pronouns to have local antecedents where standard dialects do not. Thus (8) is grammatical in Appalachian dialects, though not in standard British or American dialects (Montgomery and Hall 2000, § 2.3.1 and 12.1).<sup>9</sup>

- (8)<sup>1</sup>Buck got <sup>1</sup>him some cigarettes.

Standard dialects require a reflexive in (8) when *Buck* is the antecedent, and Appalachian dialects allow it. There are also linguistic contexts in which nonreflexive

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Evans 1980, § 5; Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet 2000, pp. 35, 185–186; Levinson 2000, p. 268.

<sup>9</sup> See also Wolfram and Christian 1976, pp. 121–124; Wales 1996, p. 18; Flanigan 2006, p. 1031; Montgomery 2006, Ariel 2008, p. 238; <http://microsyntax.sites.yale.edu/personal-datives>; and especially Horn 2008, p. 177.

pronouns must have a local antecedent in standard dialects and reflexives are not right:

(9) Bob brought Alice with him/\*himself.

The defect in (9) is not that the reflexive cannot be bound by the local antecedent *Bob*, but that the nonreflexive should be used instead after *brought with*.

- Reflexives with nonlocal antecedents, called “long-distance” reflexives, are permissible in some structures.<sup>10</sup> In (10), the local domain is a nominal phrase and the reflexive is bound by the subject of the local clause:<sup>11</sup>

- (10) (a) Mary ignored the blood on her/herself.  
 (b) Mary kept her violin near her/herself at all times.  
 (c) Mary saw pictures of her/herself in the paper.  
 (d) Mary only associates with people like her/herself.  
 (e) Mary played music written by her/herself.  
 (f) Mary touched the foot of \*her/herself.

English generally allows nonreflexives with the same antecedents in these constructions too ((f) is an exception), while other languages (e.g., Russian) do not (Comrie 1998, p. 339). In (11)(a), *herself* may be bound outside the local clause (by *Mary* rather than *the policewoman*), and in (11)(b), *himself* must be bound by the name in the previous sentence:

- (11) (a) Mary regrets that the policewoman gave Jack and herself a ticket.  
 (b) Bush has not gained ground. It is still close between himself and Kerry.<sup>12</sup>

Huang (2000, § 2.3; 2004, § 1.3 and 2.3; 2007, § 8.3) identifies many languages that commonly allow long-distance reflexives across sentence boundaries, including Chinese, Norwegian, Italian, Russian, and Greek.

- English first- and second-person reflexive pronouns may also have nonlocal antecedents when they are used logophorically. Logophoric use is limited in English, but possible when a propositional attitude verb is followed by a subordinate clause in quotation marks:

- (12) (a) Jack thought “Mary loves Bob and me/myself.”  
 (b) Jack thought that Mary loves Bob and me/myself.

In (12)(b), *me* must be used deictically and refer to the speaker. It cannot have an anaphoric antecedent. But in (12)(a), *me* cannot be used deictically: it must have

<sup>10</sup> See Bhat 1978, p. 8; Quirk et al. 1985, p. 359; Chomsky 1995, pp. 102–105; Wales 1996, p. 188; Huang 2004, p. 293, 2006a, p. 232; Ariel 2008, p. 215.

<sup>11</sup> These exceptions to Rule A can be avoided by requiring the local domain to be a clause. But then more exceptions to Rule B are created given that nonreflexives can appear with the same antecedents. On Chomsky’s (1995, pp. 102–105) final formulation, the local domain differs for reflexives and nonreflexives, and creates new problems for Rule A. The Reinhart and Reuland (1993) version of Rule B allows (10), but also allows \**Tom works with <sup>l</sup>him*.

<sup>12</sup> The second sentence here comes from a CNN interview cited by Ariel (2008, p. 252).

*Jack* as its anaphoric antecedent. This type of anaphoric use is described as “logophoric” because it is used to represent what a subject is thinking the way he represents it.<sup>13</sup> Whereas *myself* behaves like *me* in (12), they behave differently in an example Horn (2008, p. 175) attributes to Lakoff (1972, p. 639):

- (13) (a) I<sub>1</sub> dreamed I<sub>1</sub> was <sup>1</sup>Brigitte Bardot<sub>2</sub> and <sup>1</sup>I<sub>2</sub> kissed me<sub>1</sub>.  
 (b) I<sub>1</sub> dreamed I<sub>1</sub> was <sup>1</sup>Brigitte Bardot<sub>2</sub> and <sup>1,2</sup>I<sub>2</sub> kissed <sup>2</sup>myself<sub>2</sub>.

In (13)(b), both the third *I* and *myself* are logophoric; *Brigitte Bardot* is the antecedent of the third *I*, which is the antecedent of *myself*. In (13)(a), the third *I* is logophoric, but *me* is deictic. Third-person pronouns cannot be bound by the subject of the main clause in logophoric contexts, however, as (14) illustrates:

- (14) (a) \*The <sup>1</sup>Dean thought “Dick does not respect <sup>1</sup>him.”  
 (b) \*The Dean thought “<sup>1</sup>Dick does not respect <sup>1</sup>him.”  
 (c) \*The <sup>1</sup>Dean thought “Dick does not respect <sup>1</sup>himself.”  
 (d) The Dean thought “<sup>1</sup>Dick does not respect <sup>1</sup>himself.”

In contrast, Rules A and B both hold for the nonlogophoric (15):

- (15) The Dean thought that Dick does not respect \_\_\_.

*Himself* would have to have *Dick* as its antecedent; *him* could refer back to *the Dean* but not *Dick*. Second- and third-person pronouns can be used logophorically with direct or indirect objects as their nonlocal antecedent, as (16) illustrates:

- (16) <sup>1</sup>The Dean thought of <sup>2</sup>Kathy “<sup>1</sup>I want people like <sup>2</sup>her/<sup>2</sup>you/<sup>2</sup>yourself on this committee.”

- First- and second-person reflexive pronouns can sometimes occur with no antecedents at all, as in (12)(b) and (17):

- (17) The Dean appointed Kathy and myself/yourself to the committee.<sup>14</sup>

The reflexives are here used deictically. *Me* or *you* could be used instead.

- Cognate reflexive and nonreflexive pronouns do not always have complementary distributions, as (8), (10), (11), (12), (16), and (17) illustrate. According to Huang (2004, p. 293), the lack of complementarity is even more common in other languages.

We have been observing that Rules A and B do not hold for all pronouns, structures, and languages. They are nonetheless important rules that do hold for a wide variety

<sup>13</sup> Levinson 2000, pp. 314–315, 423; Huang 2000, pp. 225–229, 2004, p. 2.4.1, 2006a, pp. 235–237; Fillmore 2003, p. 406; Sportiche 2003, p. 408; Bhat 2004, p. 33; Chap. 3. Pronouns also occur logophorically in thought bubbles, where they are demonstrative rather than anaphoric. Logophoric uses of pronouns in English have been overlooked, I believe, because of three widespread misconceptions: (i) that quotation marks are always metalinguistic, used to form the name of the enclosed expression; (ii) that thinking is inner speech; and (iii) that *I* and *you* are always used deictically to refer to the speaker and the speaker’s addressee.

<sup>14</sup> Quirk et al. (1985, p. 389) noticed such uses, but regarded them as “abbreviated” versions of the emphatic sequences *me myself* and *you yourself*. See also Wales 1996, p. 192–6.

of structures in English and many other languages. The nonuniversality of the rules casts no doubt on the fact that they hold for structures like *Hemingway shot* \_\_ (contrast Huang 2004, p. 292). *Shot* in (1) is typical of a large and open class of transitive verbs, including *stabbed, punched, kicked, saw, heard, felt, poisoned, fed, dressed*, and so on; of transitive verb phrases, including *shot \_\_ in the foot, shot \_\_ on Monday, shot \_\_ with a pistol, shot \_\_ in the foot on Monday with a pistol*, and so on; and of intransitive verb phrases, including *laughed at \_\_, talked to \_\_, and played with \_\_*. Moreover, the rules hold when any singular noun phrase replaces *Hemingway* in (1), including *Fitzgerald* and *Einstein* as well as *Hemingway's father's son* and *The author of For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

### 3 Neo-Gricean Pragmatics

One response to evidence that Rules A and B do not hold for all pronouns, structures, and languages would be to look for exceptionless syntactic rules that are more complex and differ from one language to another. Levinson and Huang propose instead to account for the data in terms of generalized conversational implicatures (GCIs) and neo-Gricean pragmatic principles. They claim that the neo-Gricean account is “empirically more adequate” than a syntactic account, showing that “syntax interacts with pragmatics to determine many of the anaphoric processes that are thought to be at the very heart of grammar” (Huang 2004, p. 304; see also Huang 2000, p. 213; 2007, pp. 257–258, p. 265; 2010, p. 3). The result “would amount to a substantial redistribution of the division of labor between grammar and pragmatics” (Huang 2000, p. 265). This division is efficient, they believe, because we get the pragmatic explanations “for free” (Levinson 2000, p. 328)—i.e., from general principles that are independently supported. We can eliminate rules from the principles of grammar (Levinson 2000, p. 289).

Levinson (2000) reworked Grice's (1989) maxims of quantity, relation, and manner into his Q-, I-, and M-principles. Each principle is stated in three ways: as a “speaker's maxim,” as a “recipient's corollary,” and as a “heuristic.” Each principle is intended to predict and explain a pattern of default inference or preferred interpretation, with which GCIs are identified. The inferences are said to be derived from the principles, which induce the implicatures.

#### Q-Principle

*Heuristic:* What is not said, is not.

*Speaker's maxim:* Do not provide a statement that is informationally weaker than your knowledge of the world allows, unless providing an informationally stronger statement would contravene the I-principle. Specifically, select the informationally strongest paradigmatic alternative that is consistent with the facts.

*Recipient's corollary:* The speaker made the strongest statement consistent with what he knows.



## Explananda

*Default inference rule:* If a speaker uses a sentence  $\sigma$  expressing proposition P instead of a sentence  $\sigma'$  expressing a stronger proposition  $P^+$  on a Horn scale, then the recipient can infer that the speaker meant to convey  $\neg P^+$ .<sup>15</sup>

*GCI:*  $\sigma$  implicates  $\neg P^+$ .

The Q-principle is intended to explain the paradigm quantity or scalar implicature whereby *Some passengers survived* implicates “Not all passengers survived.” *Some passengers survived* is the sentence  $\sigma$  the speaker used, and *All passengers survived* is the alternative sentence  $\sigma'$  the speaker did not use. Speakers who use the weaker sentence rather than the stronger sentence generally implicate that not all passengers survived.

## I-Principle

*Heuristic:* What is simply described is stereotypically exemplified.

*Speaker's maxim:* Say as little as necessary; that is, produce the minimal linguistic information sufficient to achieve your communicational ends (bearing Q in mind).

*Recipient's corollary:* The informational content of the speaker's utterance is a more specific proposition describing the normal way what is said would be true, unless the speaker has used a marked or prolix expression.<sup>16</sup>

## Explananda

*Default inference rule:* If a speaker uses a sentence  $\sigma$  expressing a proposition P, and  $P^n$  is a more specific proposition describing the normal or typical way P would be true, then the recipient can infer that the speaker expressed  $P^n$  without needing to use a sentence  $\sigma'$  that expresses  $P^n$ .

*GCI:*  $\sigma$  implicates  $P^n$ .

One GCI the I-principle is intended to explain is that whereby *Harry and Sue bought a piano* ( $\sigma$ ) implicates the proposition expressed by *Harry and Sue bought a piano together* ( $\sigma'$ ).

## M-Principle

*Heuristic:* What is said in an abnormal way, is not normal.

*Speaker's maxim:* Indicate an abnormal, nonstereotypical situation by using marked expressions that contrast with those you would use to describe the corresponding normal, stereotypical situation.

<sup>15</sup> In Levinson's (2000, p. 76) formulation, what can be inferred is *the speaker knows  $\neg P^+$* . But then the default inference is not the GCI, as Levinson maintains, and as is true in the I- and M-principles. I also made all the corollaries statements rather than directives (as in Levinson's formulation of the M-principle) so that they have truth values and make predictions.

<sup>16</sup> Levinson's (2000, p. 114) formulation was “Amplify the informational content of the speaker's utterance, by finding the most *specific* interpretation, up to what you judge to be the speaker's m-intended point, unless the speaker has broken the maxim of minimization by using a marked or prolix expression.” To better suit Levinson's purposes, I made the maxim consistent with the heuristic, which specifies what is stereotypically exemplified, and dropped “up to what you judge to be the speaker's m-intended point,” which is inappropriate for *generalized* conversational implicatures.

*Recipient's corollary:* What is said in an abnormal way indicates an abnormal situation, or: marked messages indicate marked situations.

## Explananda

*Default inference rule:* If a speaker uses a sentence  $\sigma$  containing a marked expression  $\mu$  expressing proposition P instead of an unmarked equivalent  $\sigma'$ , then the recipient may infer that the speaker did not want to assert what  $\sigma'$  I-implicates ( $P^n$ ), and is thus conveying that P is true in an abnormal way  $P^a$ .

GCI:  $\sigma$  implicates  $P^a$ .

The M-principle is intended to explain why *John had the ability to solve the problem* ( $\sigma$ ) implicates the proposition expressed by *John did not solve the problem*.  $\sigma$  in this case is equivalent to  $\sigma'$  *John could solve the problem*, which implicates “John did solve the problem” by the I-principle.  $\sigma'$  is marked because it is more prolix than  $\sigma$ .

I will use *Q-implicature* for any case in which a speaker or sentence saying P implicates the denial of a stronger proposition  $P^+$ . I will similarly use *I-implicature* for implicating a more specific proposition  $P^n$  describing a typical or normal way P could be true, and *M-implicature* for implicating a more specific proposition  $P^a$  describing an atypical or abnormal way P could be true. I use these terms descriptively, without commitment to whether or not the implicatures are explained by the principles Levinson proposes. However they arise, these are common patterns of implicature.

The fact that many forms have more than one GCI is a difficulty for Levinson's identification of GCIs with *default* inferences. For example, *Some passengers survived* has two GCIs: *Not all survived* and *I do not know whether all survived*. It is never used with both implicatures, so neither is a default inference. We need further information about the context to infer which was intended.

Before looking at how neo-Griceans explain facts about pronouns, we need to note several general problems with Levinson's system. Consider the inference rules. Suppose an airline official utters *Some passengers survived*. The Q-rule tells us we can infer that the official conveyed “not all passengers survived.” Given that Q-implicature is a common pattern of implicature, there is *some reason* to make this inference. But the I-rule tells us we can infer that the content is “All passengers survived.” For that is the typical outcome of a flight. Given that I-implicature is also common, there is some reason to make this inference too. But we cannot make both inferences. Neither inference, therefore, is warranted. The truth of the premise does not make the conclusion probable, except perhaps in particular conversational contexts. The Q- and M-principles conflict in the same way:  $P^n$  and  $P^a$  are both forms of  $P^+$ .

One way Levinson attempts to prevent such conflicts is by including provisos in the speakers' maxims that refer to the other principles. The Q-maxim says not to make a weaker statement than one could “unless providing an informationally stronger statement would contravene the I-principle.” The I-maxim says to say as little as necessary “bearing Q in mind.” But given both maxims, there is no way to determine whether it is permissible to say just *Some passengers survived* when one knows whether or not all survived. Moreover, the inference rules and the M-principle have no such provisos.

Levinson (2000, pp. 156–157) also postulates a ranking of his principles whereby “Q-inferences defeat I-inferences inconsistent with them.”

*Resolution of inconsistent potential implicatures*

Priority is assigned to inferences according to the principle under which they are generated:  
Q-implicatures > M-implicatures > I-implicatures. (Levinson 2000, p. 157; Huang 2000, pp. 210–211)

In support, Levinson and Huang cite many examples of constructions with Q-implicatures rather than M-implicatures (when the M-principle predicts them), M-implicatures rather than I-implicatures (when the I-principle predicts them), and as in the student example, Q-implicatures rather than I-implicatures. However, such examples do not suffice to show that Q-implicatures always defeat potential M- and I-implicatures. No other rationale is apparent. Nothing in the neo-Gricean principles themselves tells us why *Some passengers survived* should implicate “Not all survived” rather than “All survived.” The only reason for saying that the Q-implicature defeats the I-implicature is *ex post facto*: The sentence has the Q-implicature. If Q-implicatures did always defeat others, there should be no M- or I-implicatures. Whenever there are, Levinson’s ranking of implicatures makes the wrong prediction. Suppose the speaker says *John turned the key and the car started*. The I-principle predicts that the sentence implicates “The car started because John turned the key.” The Q-principle predicts that it implicates the denial of that proposition. Given what it actually implicates, the I-inference must “defeat” the Q-inference. But nothing in Levinson’s system tells us why.

The Q-principle is especially problematic. The recipient’s corollary states that *the speaker made the strongest statement consistent with what she knows*. This is falsified every time we implicate something we know. An implicature is something meant but not said. Stating that something is the case is one way of saying that it is. If the speaker does *state P* and *implicate I*, then the speaker did not make the strongest *statement* consistent with what he knows. If she knows P&I but only stated P, she violated the speaker’s maxim. If what is not said is not, then we should be able to infer that I is false. The Q-principle undercuts all implicatures.

The Q-heuristic is, as Levinson (2000, p. 32) puts it, “wildly underspecified.” If all the speaker says is that some passengers survived, we cannot infer that everything else is not the case, nor that the speaker has made the strongest statement consistent with what she knows. She undoubtedly knows that grass is green, for example. It is for this reason, presumably, that one part of the speaker’s maxim specifies selecting the strongest “paradigmatic alternative.” *Some passengers survived and grass is green* is generally not a paradigmatic alternative to *Some passengers survived*. The default inference is even more restricted: to propositions that are stronger on a “Horn scale.” In Horn (1989, pp. 231, 240), quantitative scales are defined by entailment.  $\langle All, some \rangle$  qualifies because the proposition expressed by *Some S are P* is entailed by, and therefore weaker than, the paradigmatic alternative expressed by *All S are P*. However:

Further conditions have to be put on Horn scales, lest they overgenerate (Gazdar 1979, p. 57 ff.; Atlas and Levinson 1981, p. 44). Clearly we do not implicate the negation of every proposition that entails what we say. (Levinson 2000, p. 79)

Levinson notes that “*Mary regrets Bill died*” entails “*Mary knows Bill died.*” Yet speakers who say *Mary knows Bill died* would generally *not* implicate “*Mary does not regret Bill died.*” Similarly, “*Only some passengers survived*” entails “*Some passengers survived.*” Yet speakers who utter the latter do not implicate the negation of the proposition expressed by the former, which would implicate further that all passengers survived. It is not the entailment scales that overgenerate, however, but Levinson’s Q-principle if Horn scales are entailment scales. To prevent overgeneration, Levinson places further restrictions on Horn scales: the terms must be: *of the same form class, in the same register, equally lexicalized, and from the same semantic field* (see also Huang 2000, p. 208). Levinson denies that *<regrets, knows>* is a Horn scale because “*regret* introduces semantic parameters additional to those involved in *know*” (Levinson 2000, p. 80). *<Only some, some>* does not qualify because *only some* is not lexicalized.

Even when the inference rule is limited to such Horn scales, it still overgenerates. For not all qualifying scales generate generalized Q-implicatures. Examples are *<several, some>* and *<novelist, author>*. *Some students failed* could be used in special contexts to implicate “It is not the case that several students failed,” but this is not a GCI. Similarly, instances of *NP was an author* do not generally implicate “NP was not a novelist,” although an utterance could in a particular context.

Furthermore, there is no reason to think that the *reason* why *<regrets, knows>* and *<only some, some>* fail to generate generalized Q-implicatures is their not meeting Levinson’s additional requirements. For Q-implicatures *are* generated by many other entailment scales, including *<nearly all, some>*, *<since, if>*, and *<knows, believes>* (Levinson 2000, p. 36). For example, *Johnny ate some of the cookies* Q-implicates “Johnny did not eat nearly all the cookies” even though *<nearly all, some>* fails to satisfy the lexicalization constraint. *Sam believes he is sick* implicates “Sam does not know he is sick” even though *<knows, believes>* fails to satisfy the one semantic parameter requirement.

Finally, not all Q-implicatures involve paradigmatic alternatives. For example, in addition to the scalar implicature “Not all S are P,” *Some S are P* also has the ignorance implicature “I (the speaker) do not know that all S are P” (or “It is unknown whether all S are P”) (compare and contrast Levinson 2000, pp. 76–79). Instances of *Some S are P* never have both implicatures in any given context, but they are commonly used with one or the other. Neither is a default inference, but both are GCIs. *Some survived* would naturally implicate “I do not know that all survived” in a context in which the speaker is asked “Do you know whether all passengers survived?” This would be a Q-implicature because *I know all passengers survived* entails *Some survived*. But these are not paradigmatic alternatives, and are not generally salient contrasts. Given that Q-implicatures can exist without paradigmatic alternatives or Horn scales, and that the latter can exist without Q-implicatures, it seems clear that these relationships play no role in explaining any Q-implicatures.

The I-principle also overgenerates. It is intended to explain why “John turned the key *and* the car started” implicates “the car started *because* John turned the key.” Turning the key stereotypically causes the engine to start via a chain of electrical, mechanical, and chemical events. Yet, the conjunction does not implicate anything so specific. The I-principle is also intended to explain why *Harry and Sue bought a*

*piano* implicates that they bought it together. But considering all pairs of people, not just married couples or partners, what is stereotypical is buying pianos separately. The M-principle also overgenerates massively. *Four-sided equilateral* is marked by prolixity and technicality compared to *square*. Yet, *the table is a four-sided equilateral* does not implicate that it is abnormally square.

In sum, the neo-Gricean principles do not even tend to be true, and the inference rules are unwarranted. The three principles and rules conflict, making prediction impossible. The factors identified are not explanatory. These problems are not unique to Levinson's system. Grice's and Horn's principles conflict and overgenerate just as badly (Davis 1998, 2010, § 7; 2013, § 3). I argued in Davis (1998) that the problem with principle-based theories is the fundamental *conventionality* of language. The sense of "convention" applicable to language is that of a common practice that serves a common interest and perpetuates itself (through the force of precedent, habit, traditional transmission, and normative pressure) despite being arbitrary to some extent (in that there are other practices that could serve the same interest and perpetuate themselves in the same ways).<sup>17</sup> The primary common interest in the case of language is communication. Like word and sentence meanings, GCIs are conventional in this sense, as Levinson (2000, p. 23) himself acknowledges. Speakers commonly use sentences of the form *S believes p* with the Q-implicature "S does not know p." The practice is self-perpetuating in that past use with this implicature serves as a precedent for future uses, creates habits, and so on. Most importantly, the practice is arbitrary in that other practices could have arisen and would have perpetuated themselves the same way if they had, including the use of *S believes p* with no such implicature. Conversational implicature conventions are not as arbitrary as lexical or syntactic conventions, or the sort of conventional nonconversational implicature distinguishing *but* from *and*, because the linguistic meaning of a sentence makes some conversational implicatures more natural to us than others. GCIs are layered on top of sentence meanings, to use Levinson's (2000, § 1.2) metaphor. So GCIs are "motivated" to some extent.<sup>18</sup> But the linguistic meaning of a sentence does not on anyone's theory determine what it can be used to implicate. A speaker could, in a particular context, use a sentence of the form *S knows p* to implicate "S does not regret p," and such a use could have become conventional. We should no more expect there to be a principled explanation for why *S believes p* has a type of GCI that *S knows p* lacks than there is for why *believes* and *knows* have the lexical meanings they do. The difficulty of finding principles that cover all GCIs in English should be no more surprising than the "irregularity" of English grammar. When GCIs become not only conventional but also direct, they become additional meanings and cease being implicatures. Idioms typically result from this process, and metaphors frequently become lexicalized (cf. Levinson 2000, p. 279).

<sup>17</sup> This characterization roughly follows Lewis (1969). See Davis (2003, Chap. 9) for a more complete analysis.

<sup>18</sup> To say that conventions are arbitrary is not to say that they arose randomly (compare and contrast Ariel 2008, § 4.1). Driving cars on the right is arbitrary in America in that Americans could drive on the left. But the convention did not arise randomly: it was a natural extension of driving horses and carriages on the right. Napoleon reportedly ordered a change to driving horses and carriages on the right because the enemy Britain drove them on the left.

## 4 The Q-Account of Rule B

Huang hypothesizes that the data summarized by Rule B is explained by Q-implicatures and the Q-principle:

Given this principle, the use of a semantically weaker pronoun where a semantically stronger reflexive could occur gives rise to a conversational implicature which conveys the negation of the more informative, coreferential interpretation associated with the use of the reflexive.... (Huang 2006a, pp. 233–234)<sup>19</sup>

Huang here follows Levinson's derivation:

The alternates  $\langle$ *himself*, *him* $\rangle$  form a clear contrast set, one member more informative than the other, as in a Horn scale, such that the use of the weaker *him* Q-implicates the inapplicability of the stronger *himself*. (Levinson 2000, p. 287)

Levinson and Huang make four separate claims. Let  $\Sigma(\textit{himself})$  and  $\Sigma(\textit{him})$  be sentences that differ only in whether they have *himself* or *him* in one of the object positions. *Hemingway shot himself* and *Hemingway shot him* are examples:

- H1  $\Sigma(\textit{him})$  implicates  $\neg\Sigma(\textit{himself})$ .
- H2 H1 describes a scalar implicature
- H3 H1 is predicted and explained by the Q-principle.
- H4 H1 accounts for the data summarized by Rule B.

I will argue that all four hypotheses are false.

The fact with which we began is that (18)(b) cannot be interpreted the same way (18)(a) must be interpreted. For the *him* in (18)(b) cannot have *Hemingway* as its anaphoric antecedent. What H1 asserts is that (18)(b) implicates (18)(c).

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (18) (a) Hemingway shot himself.               | $\Sigma(\textit{himself})$                    |
| (b) Hemingway shot him.                        | $\Sigma(\textit{him})$                        |
| (c) Hemingway did not shoot himself.           | $\neg\Sigma(\textit{himself})$                |
| (d) Hemingway shot someone other than himself. | $\Sigma(\textit{someone other than himself})$ |

If a speaker S were using (18)(b) to implicate (18)(c) on a particular occasion, we could infer that S is not using *him* to refer to Hemingway, and therefore that *Hemingway* was not its antecedent. So H1 appears to account for Rule B.

Predicting that  $\Sigma(\textit{him})$  implicates  $\neg\Sigma(\textit{himself})$  from the Q-principle suffers from the general problems with neo-Gricean derivations detailed in Sect. 3. By the very same logic, we should be able to infer that since (18)(b) has *him*, where the counter reflexives *someone else*, *someone other than himself*, or *others* could have occurred, the speaker did not intend disjoint reference. Hence, the speaker must be implicating *conjoint* reference. Levinson's lexicalization constraint fails for  $\langle$ *someone other than himself*, *him* $\rangle$ , but not for  $\langle$ *others*, *him* $\rangle$ . And we observed in Sect. 3 that not all Q-implicatures are associated with Horn scales as Levinson defines them.

The neo-Gricean explanation overgenerates in another way. Nothing in the Q-principle restricts the explanation to the specific structures for which Rule B holds. So if the fact that  $\langle$ *himself*, *him* $\rangle$  is a Horn scale explained why *him* could not have

<sup>19</sup> See also Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet 2000, p. 185; Huang 1991; 2004, p. 309; 2006a, p. 233–234; 2010, p. 4.

the same antecedent as *himself* in (18), it should similarly predict that *him* could not have the same anaphoric antecedent as *himself* in the sentence forms in (19).

- (19) (a) John ignored the blood on \_\_\_\_.  
 (b) John got \_\_ a new car (Appalachian dialect).  
 (c) John regrets that the policewoman gave Bob and \_\_\_\_ a ticket.  
 (d) John moved closer. The chair is still between \_\_ and Mary.

In (19), the use of the *him* does not implicate the inapplicability of *himself*, as Levinson claims (see above). It indicates neither disjoint reference nor lack of anaphoric linkage.

The neo-Gricean principles conflict here, too. Levinson and Huang use the Q-principle to predict that (20)(b) implicates the denial of (20)(a):

- (20) (a) John shaved himself.  
 (b) John shaved him.

But the I-principle applies at least as well.

The operation of the I principle induces an inference to a proposition that accords best with the most stereotypical and explanatory expectation given real-world knowledge. (Huang 2004, p. 299)

While barbers shave other people, the stereotypical case of shaving involves shaving oneself. So, the I-principle should predict that (20)(b) implicates (20)(a) rather than its denial. No reason is evident why one derivation is sound but not the other, so both must be defective. We noted in Sect. 3 that Levinson's hypothesis that Q-implicatures take precedence over potential I-implicatures was at best *ad hoc*, and that I-implicatures are often observed where there could be Q-implicatures.

The prediction that  $\Sigma(\textit{him})$  implicates  $-\Sigma(\textit{himself})$  is furthermore incorrect. An utterance of *Hemingway shot him* would *not* generally implicate, or be interpreted as implicating, that Hemingway did not shoot himself. In different utterance contexts, *him* refers to different people. So suppose Mary used *him* to refer to Fitzgerald. Then by uttering (18)(b), Mary said that Hemingway shot Fitzgerald. By doing so, she would not imply or suggest that Hemingway did not shoot himself. This is particularly clear if Mary, like the rest of us, knows that Hemingway committed suicide. Suppose, on the other hand, that Jane used *him* pointing at a picture of Hemingway. Then Jane has said that Hemingway shot Hemingway. Unless she were being ironic, Jane could not thereby implicate that Hemingway did not shoot himself.

One reason a sentence of the form *A shot B* might appear to implicate *A did not shoot himself* is that instances of the former are often used when it is given that A shot only one person, and the goal is to identify whom A shot. In such a context, *A shot B* would implicate *A did not shoot himself*. But mass murders, serial killers, and wars show that to be a special case. We can observe the same absence of the hypothesized implicature with other instances of  $\Sigma(\textit{him})$  and  $\Sigma(\textit{himself})$  when it would be unusual for there to be just one object. If Jane says *The barber shaves him*, we would be unlikely to interpret her as implying that *The barber does not shave himself*. Rule B applies nonetheless.

Finally, Rule B holds not only for affirmative sentences like (18)(b) but also for negative sentences like (21)(a):

- (21) (a) Hemingway did not shoot him.  $\Sigma(him)$   
 (b) Hemingway did not not shoot himself.  $-\Sigma(himself)$

When (21)(a) is  $\Sigma(him)$ , it is completely obvious that it does not implicate  $-\Sigma(himself)$ , which is equivalent to *Hemingway did shoot himself*. If (21)(a) did have that implicature, it would not be a Q-implicature. So the fact that *him* cannot have *Hemingway* as its antecedent in (21)(a) clearly has nothing to do with a Q-implicature that arises from the fact that the speaker used *him* rather than *himself*.

It is more plausible that speakers use (18)(b) to implicate (18)(d). This is particularly likely on occasions in which the speaker used *him* to refer to the equally well-known author F. Scott Fitzgerald. And it may even be true if the speaker used *him* while pointing at a picture of Hemingway, provided the speaker thinks the picture is of someone else. But the speaker will not implicate that Hemingway shot someone other than himself if he was pointing at a picture of Hemingway and knew it was Hemingway. Yet, Rule B still applies in this case: The antecedent of *him* in (18)(b) could not be *Hemingway*. So, the hypothesis that (18)(b) implicates (18)(d) does not explain Rule B. Moreover, (18)(d) would not be a Q-implicature. *Hemingway shot someone other than himself* is not the negation of a statement that entails *Hemingway shot him*, no matter who *him* refers to. And it is not the negation of *Hemingway shot himself*. (18)(b) and (18)(d) are neither mutually exclusive nor jointly exhaustive.

In other statements of his account, Levinson derives a very different implicature:

Now, expressions that are paradigmatically contrastive (can occur in the same syntactic slots), that are in privative opposition within a semantic field, and that are both lexicalized ought to form a Horn scale. If  $\langle himself, him \rangle$  forms such a scale, asserting an utterance with the less informative *him* in a slot where the expression *himself* could have occurred should implicate that the speaker is avoiding the more informative statement. In effect, by utilizing a pronoun where a reflexive could have been used, the speaker Q-implicates disjoint reference. (Levinson 2000, p. 278; see also 271)

Here, he is claiming that (22)(a) implicates (22)(b):

- (22) (a) Hemingway shot him.  
 (b) The speaker is not saying that Hemingway shot himself.  
 (c) The speaker does not intend *him* and *Hemingway* to be co-referential.

Huang (2004, p. 308) similarly says that “if the reflexive is not employed but a [nonreflexive] pronoun is used instead, a Q implicature will arise, namely, that no coreference is intended.” Here, he is claiming that (22)(a) implicates (22)(c) (see also Huang 2004, p. 310). (22)(b) and (c) will generally be true when (a) is uttered. But that does not mean that by uttering (22)(a), speakers generally implicate (b) or (c). Indeed, both would be unusual things to implicate. And even if (22)(a) did implicate (22)(b) or (c), it would not be a Q-implicature. On any occasion of use, (22)(b) is not the denial of a proposition that entails (22)(a), nor the denial of any paradigmatic alternate to the proposition expressed by (22)(a). The same goes for (22)(c). (22)(b) and (c) are denials, but of propositions about totally different sub-



jects. (22)(a) attributes a shooting to Hemingway. (22)(b) denies that the speaker is performing a speech act and (22)(c) denies that the speaker has a certain intention. So, the truth (22)(b) and (c) when (22)(a) is uttered provides no support for the Q-account of Rule B.

## 5 $\langle$ *Himself, him* $\rangle$ as a Horn Scale

In order for  $\Sigma(\textit{him}) \text{+} > -\Sigma(\textit{himself})$  to be a Q-implicature, and  $\langle \textit{himself, him} \rangle$  to be a Horn scale, the proposition expressed by  $\Sigma(\textit{himself})$  must be stronger than the proposition expressed by  $\Sigma(\textit{him})$ . That is,  $\Sigma(\textit{himself})$  must entail  $\Sigma(\textit{him})$  but not conversely.  $\Sigma(\textit{himself})$  and  $\Sigma(\textit{him})$  are never related in this way. When *himself* and *him* have different referents, the propositions expressed are independent. When the pronouns have the same referent, the propositions are equal in strength. Unlike (23) (a), (23)(b) expresses different propositions in different contexts of use because *him* refers to different men in different contexts:

- (23) (a) Hemingway shot himself.  
 (b) Hemingway shot him.

It is impossible to know what proposition (23)(b) expresses, and therefore what it is entailed by, unless we know the referent of *him*. If *him* refers to Fitzgerald, (23) (a) does not entail (23)(b). The proposition that Hemingway shot himself and the proposition that Hemingway shot him (Fitzgerald) are logically independent. Neither is stronger than the other. Neither is more informative than the other. The only context in which (23)(a) will entail (23)(b) is one in which *him* refers to Hemingway, as when the speaker is pointing at a picture of Hemingway. Even in that case, (23)(a) is not stronger than (23)(b), for (23)(b) also entails (23)(a). In this context, (23)(a) and (b) do not differ in strength because they are equivalent.

The proposition that Hemingway shot himself *is* stronger than the proposition expressed by (24)(b) when *him* has *some man* as its antecedent:

- (24) (a) Hemingway shot himself.  
 (b) <sup>1</sup>Some man is such that Hemingway shot <sup>1</sup>him.

(24)(b) illustrates the “bound variable” use of pronouns. On the indicated interpretation, the proposition expressed by (24)(b) is equivalent to the proposition that Hemingway shot *someone*, and is clearly entailed by (24)(a). On this interpretation, (24)(b) is like (24)(a) and unlike (18)(b) in expressing the same proposition in every context of use. Note that if (24)(a) is an instance of  $\Sigma(\textit{himself})$ , then (24)(b) is not  $\Sigma(\textit{him})$ . For they differ in more ways than whether *him* or *himself* occurs after *shot*. Note further that because (24)(a) is stronger than (24)(b), (24)(b) *could* be used to implicate the denial of (24)(a). The use of (24)(b) would not normally carry that implicature, so it is not a GCI. But this Q-implicature would be very natural if the speaker uttered (24)(b) in response to “Did Hemingway shoot himself?”

What led Levinson and Huang to classify  $\langle \textit{himself, him} \rangle$  as a Horn scale? Levinson offers a number of arguments that “coreferential interpretations will indeed be

more informative than noncoreferential ones” (2000, p. 273). One is based on the assumption that “the greater the number of possible state descriptions that are ruled out by (or are incompatible with) a proposition, the more informative it is.” This is reasonable because if Q is stronger than P, then the possible states of affairs (situations, worlds) in which Q is true is a proper subset of the situations in which P is true.<sup>20</sup> However, the situations in which Hemingway shot himself is not a proper subset of the situations in which *Hemingway shot him* is true no matter who *him* refers to. If *him* refers to Hemingway, the sets are identical (improper subsets). If *him* refers to Fitzgerald, the sets are overlapping.

Levinson’s second argument assumes that “a coreferential interpretation reduces the number of entities required in the domain of discourse.” It might seem evident that while (23)(a) entails the existence of just one person (Hemingway), (23)(b) entails the existence of two (Hemingway and someone else). But (23)(b) does not entail that there are two people. Recall the Sect. 2 distinction between having the same referent and being anaphorically related. (23)(b) can properly be used when the speaker is using *him* demonstratively and pointing at a picture of Hemingway. In that context, *him* has the same referent as *Hemingway* and so (23)(b) entails the existence of just one object, Hemingway. The reflexive does not reduce the number of entities required even when *him* refers to someone other than Hemingway. For *Hemingway shot him (Fitzgerald)* would be true in a world in which Hemingway and Fitzgerald are the same person. That is a logical possibility. Besides, even if the truth of (23)(a) did entail the existence of fewer entities than the truth of (23)(b), that would be a reason to think that (23)(b) is stronger than (23)(a). The proposition that there are at least two people is stronger than the proposition that there is at least one person. The former entails the latter but not vice versa.<sup>21</sup>

Levinson’s (2000, p. 278) third argument is based on the premise that the occurrence of *himself* in an object position is more informative than the occurrence of *him* in that slot:

[T]he reflexive is more informative than the pronoun: it fixes reference much more narrowly. Even where the pronoun is presumed to be referentially dependent, while the reflexive must find an antecedent in a limited domain, the pronoun may pick up an antecedent in a much wider domain. (Levinson 2000, p. 278)

Consider (25):

(25) Hemingway shot \_\_\_\_.

<sup>20</sup> It does not follow that the number of Q-situations is smaller than the number of P-situations. For, both numbers are infinite and may be of the same cardinality. Even though the even numbers are a proper subset of the integers, the two sets can be put in a one-to-one correspondence. So, we cannot say that there are more integers than even numbers.

<sup>21</sup> Levinson (2000, p. 274) says “Existential statements are weak...; consequently, the fewer existential commitments the stronger the “theory” (read “assertion” for our purposes),” a claim repeated by Huang (2000, p. 216). This is backwards. Every additional existential commitment represents an additional requirement for an assertion to be true (and hence an additional way it could be false). What Levinson could say is that the fewer the existential commitments, the safer the theory is epistemically. The weaker the theory, the less evidence is needed to verify it.

It is true that if we insert *himself* in (25), it must have *Hemingway* as its antecedent, and therefore refer to Hemingway. But the occurrence of *him* in (25) is also informative. We know that *him* cannot have *Hemingway* as its antecedent, and that the nonlocal context determines its referent. The two pronouns carry *different* information, but we cannot say that one carries *more* information. Whether there is more than one referential possibility for *him* depends entirely on the particular context of utterance. If Hemingway and Fitzgerald are the only two males under discussion, there will be only one referential possibility for *him*: Fitzgerald. If there are no contextually salient males other than Hemingway for *him* to refer to, then *Hemingway shot him* will be uninterpretable. In any event, the comparison is irrelevant. What is being measured here is how informative a word choice is about what proposition is expressed by an instance of (25). As we saw, the truth of H2 depends on how informative the propositions are. The proposition expressed by (25) with *himself* is never more informative about its subject (Hemingway) than the proposition expressed with *him*. Levinson is confusing the information carried by a speech act with the information represented by the proposition asserted.

Levinson provides another reason for thinking that the reflexive pronoun is “semantically stronger” than the nonreflexive:

Q-inferences typically (but not exclusively) operate over *privative opposites* (Horn 1989, p. 317 ff.), where two expressions differ only in that one of the pair has additional semantic specification. Arguably, pronouns and reflexives have precisely this property: thus *himself* and *him* both have reference to singular, male entities whose identity is recoverable from context. They differ in that the reflexive has an additional property, which one may conceive of in different ways: one could hold that *himself* must be bound (syntactically coindexed) in a local domain, whereas the pronoun is free; or one could hold that the essential difference is that *himself* is necessarily referentially dependent on a prior NP, whereas *him* may pick up its reference in other ways (deictically or contextually). (Levinson 2000, p. 277 ff.; see also 346)

Huang makes the same claim:

Reflexives are semantically stronger than pronouns in that (i) syntactically, they typically need to be bound in some domain, and (ii) semantically, they are normally referentially dependent. (Huang 2004, p. 309; see also Huang 2000, p. 215 fn. 4, 221, 227)

There are a number of problems with this line of reasoning. First, we observed in Sect. 2 that reflexive and nonreflexive pronouns are subject to *contrary* grammatical constraints. But the constraints on the reflexive are *no stronger* than the constraints on the nonreflexive. It is true that *himself* must typically be bound in the local domain; but it is equally true that *him* must be free in the local domain. *Himself* is typically referentially dependent on a local anaphoric antecedent; but *him* is typically referentially dependent on a nonlocal contextual feature. So, the constraints are contrary rather than ranked. Second, Huang and Levinson are basing their classification of  $\langle \textit{himself}, \textit{him} \rangle$  as a Horn scale in part on the very facts they are trying to explain in terms of that scale, rendering the explanation question begging.

Third, even if the pronoun *himself* had more constraints on its interpretation and distribution than *him*, independent of what is to be explained, that fact about the *terms* would do nothing to show that the *proposition* expressed by a sentence containing one is stronger in the sense relevant to Q implicature than the proposition

expressed by a sentence containing the other. As we saw, the proposition expressed by *Hemingway shot him* varies from context to context, but it is never weaker than the proposition expressed by *Hemingway shot himself*. We say that a *general* term like *novelist* is stronger than *author* because its meaning is more specific: *Novelist* applies to people only if they author novels. The reason is not that the *term* “novelist” has an additional property; it is that the meaning of the term requires its *referents* to have an additional property. As a result, the extension of *novelist* is a proper subset of the extension of *author*; and the statement that someone is a novelist is stronger than the statement that the person is an author. In contrast, *himself* and *him* are *singular* terms. On any occasion of use, they refer to one object. The same notion of term strength does not apply. One singular term is not more general or more specific than another (contrast Huang 2004, p. 302). In any context, *himself* would refer to an object only if it is the referent of a local antecedent. *Him* would apply to an object only if it is contextually selected in another way.

Levinson recognized the overgeneration problem posed by structures like (26):

- (26) (a) John ignored the blood on himself.  
 (b) John ignored the blood on him.

The problem, recall, is that the following reasoning fails for (26)(b):

The alternates  $\langle$ *himself*, *him* $\rangle$  form a clear contrast set, one member more informative than the other, as in a Horn scale, such that the use of the weaker *him* Q-implicates the inapplicability of the stronger *himself*. (Levinson 2000, p. 287)

Levinson’s alternative is based on the observation that by using (26)(a), the speaker in some sense represents John’s subjective view of himself; (26)(b) is noticeably different:

the reflexive [in (26)] contrasts with the pronoun on two dimensions, necessary referential dependency and a subjective perspective called *logophoricity* in the literature. (Levinson 2000, p. 310; see also Huang 2004, p. 303)

the use of the informationally weaker expression is justified if one is seeking to avoid at least one of the stronger meanings. (Levinson 2000, p. 310)

This second dimension would not make *himself* stronger than *him* either. For, if the use of *himself* in a context like (26) represented John’s subjective view of himself, the use *him* to refer to John would represent an objective view of him. The perspectives would be contrary, not ranked in strength. Moreover, introducing this second dimension would undermine Levinson’s explanation of disjoint reference when *him* is used rather than *himself* in (25). Levinson would have no basis for claiming that the use of *him* rather than *himself* in (25) implicates disjoint reference rather than objective perspective. If it does implicate disjoint reference in (25), why does it not do so in (26)(b)?

I do not believe there is a contrast in logophoricity between reflexive and nonreflexive pronouns in English. Consider:

- (27) (a) The satellite destroyed itself.  
 (b) The satellite destroyed it.
- (28) (a) The satellite did not detect the dust on itself.  
 (b) The satellite did not detect the dust on it.

When *it* and *itself* have the same referent in these examples, they refer to the satellite in different ways. The semantic contrast Levinson calls “perspective” is evident in both examples. The contrast is greater in (27) because the pronouns differ not only in meaning but also in what determines their referent. But there is no difference in logophoricity. Satellites do not have a subjective perspective.

## 6 Cancelability

Even if H1 and H2 were true, the data summarized by Rule B could not be explained in terms of implicature, for conversational implicatures are *cancelable*. A sentence with a GCI can be used without that implicature. For example, *Some passengers survived* lacks the typical scalar implicature when it is followed by *Indeed, all survived*. The GCI can also be canceled by the context. If the audience asked whether any passengers survived out of fear that none did, the speaker would most naturally utter *Some passengers survived* with no scalar implicature. Given the audience’s concern, there is no point in implying that not everyone survived. But the fact with which we began is that ‘him’ cannot have *Hemingway* as its anaphoric antecedent in *Hemingway shot him*, whereas ‘himself’ must have that antecedent in *Hemingway shot himself*. A cancelable implicature generated by *him* is incapable of explaining why *him* cannot occur in certain contexts.

We have observed that Rules A and B do not account for the behavior of *himself* and *him* in all syntactic contexts, not to mention all pronouns in all languages. But nothing has cast doubt on the rule that *himself* must have a local antecedent in (1)(a) while *him* cannot have one in (1)(b). The same is true for countless other instances of  $\Sigma(\textit{himself})$  and  $\Sigma(\textit{him})$ . Whether Rules A and B hold depends entirely on the syntax and semantics of  $\Sigma(\_)$ , not the nonlinguistic context of utterance. That the rules are not linguistic universals does not make them cancelable the way implicatures and other pragmatic features are (contrast Huang 2007, p. 27).

Levinson presents examples in which *him* has the same referent as a local noun as evidence that rule B is defeasible even in paradigmatic applications:

Most readers will feel that both sides of this pattern are grammatically stipulated and thus that *him* simply cannot refer to John [in *John admires him*]. This is not however invariably the case. A crucial fact in the plausibility of this account is that the reading is, despite being a strong default interpretation, nevertheless a defeasible inference: as Evans (1980) and Reinhart (1983, p. 168 ff.) point out, the interpretations indicated by the referential indices [in (29)] are entirely natural if unusual. (Levinson 2000, p. 278)

(29) No one else voted for Marcos<sub>1</sub>, but Marcos<sub>1</sub> voted for him<sub>1</sub>.

This example does show that there is no grammatical prohibition of *him* having the same referent as a local noun. But what rule B prohibits is *him* having a local noun as its anaphoric antecedent (Sect. 2). As Levinson (2000, p. 268) puts it, “Anaphora consists in the *referential dependence* of one NP on another, rather than simply in the matter of coreference. (One might have accidental coreference...)” (29) is not

an exception to Rule B unless *him* can be read as having the second occurrence of *Marcos* as its antecedent rather than the first. But that reading is ungrammatical. Recalling that subscripts represent reference identity while superscripts represent anaphoric linkage, we can represent two ways of reading (29):

- (30) (a) No one else voted for <sup>1</sup>Marcos<sub>1</sub>, but Marcos<sub>1</sub> voted for <sup>1</sup>him<sub>1</sub>.  
 (b) \*No one else voted for Marcos<sub>1</sub>, but <sup>1</sup>Marcos<sub>1</sub> voted for <sup>1</sup>him<sub>1</sub>.

(30)(b) is a violation of Rule B, and ungrammatical. (30)(a) is grammatical, but not a violation of Rule B.

## 7 The I-Account of Rule B and the DRP

We have been examining a neo-Gricean account that attributes Rule B to the Q-principle. Neo-Griceans have also proposed an account of Rule B in terms of the I-principle. On this account, Rule B is viewed as a special case of Farmer and Harnish's (1987) DRP:

The basic idea of the DRP is that if the co-arguments of a predicate are not reflexive marked, they tend to be disjoint in reference. This observation is, of course, far from being wholly original; it is strongly reminiscent of, say, Chomsky's binding condition B. But there is a fundamental difference between the DRP on the one hand and binding condition B on the other. On Farmer and Harnish's view, the DRP is not of a syntactic or semantic but of a pragmatic nature: what it describes is essentially a usage preference (see e.g., Huang 1991, 1994 for evidence from Chinese in support of this line of argument). However, it could be equally strongly argued that the DRP is based on world knowledge, given that the fact that one entity tends to act upon another could be due largely to the way the world stereotypically is. (Huang 2000, pp. 215–216)

Levinson suggests that the DRP can be derived from the I-principle:

The origin of such a pragmatic presumption is left unclear in [Farmer and Harnish's] account, but we may perhaps be able to relate it to the GCI framework. Under a classification of actions of central human interest agents normally act upon entities other than themselves; the prototypical action—what is described by the prototypical transitive clause—is one agent acting upon some entity distinct from itself. If that is how the world stereotypically is, then an interpretation of an arbitrary transitive sentence as having referentially distinct arguments is given to us by the I-principle, which encourages and warrants an interpretation to the stereotype. (Levinson 2000, p 328; see also 346)<sup>22</sup>

The DRP is illustrated by (31)(a), which would most naturally be used and interpreted as making a claim about two different people. In fact, it would generally be misleading for a speaker to use *the author* to refer to Hemingway when uttering (31)(a):

- (31) (a) Hemingway shot the author.  
 (b) Hemingway shot him.

<sup>22</sup> See also Akmajian et al. 1990, pp. 219–23; Ariel 2008, pp. 216–219.

The DRP similarly predicts that the arguments in (31)(b) tend to have disjoint reference, and consequently that *him* tends not to have *Hemingway* as its antecedent.

The DRP describes a presumption, not a requirement. It is defeasible. Thus, in (31)(a), “the author” *could* refer to Hemingway. The DRP is therefore no substitute for Rule B. First, a *tendency* to disjoint reference does not explain why “him” *cannot* be interpreted a certain way in certain syntactic contexts. Second, what Rule B prohibits is *him* having *Hemingway* as its antecedent in (31)(b), not it having the same referent as *Hemingway* (Sect. 2). *Him* could not have *Hemingway* as its antecedent in (31)(b) even if shooting oneself were stereotypical in the real world. The evidence from Chinese Huang cited in support of taking (31)(b) to be like (31)(a) consists of “binding patterns where a [nonreflexive] pronoun is happily bound in its local domain” (Huang 2000, p. 222). (7) *Giuanin a parla sempre d’chiel* is an example from Piedmontese. Such evidence may show that Rule B is not a rule of universal grammar. But examples from other languages are not capable of showing that *him* could be anaphorically linked to *Hemingway* in English sentence (31)(b).

The presumption of disjoint reference is moreover not universal. Disjoint reference is not presumed, for example, in many of the structures not governed by Rule B (Sect. 2):

- (32) (a) Mary ignored the blood on her.
- (b) Giuanin a parla sempre d’chiel.
- (c) Mary brought Jack with her.

Disjoint reference is also not presumed when the local domain for a pronoun is a nominal phrase:<sup>23</sup>

- (33) (a) Hemingway shot his cat.
- (b) Hemingway loved Fitzgerald’s tribute to him.

While *his* and *him* could refer to someone other than Hemingway in (33), we would presume that the speaker was talking about Hemingway’s cat, and Fitzgerald’s tribute to Hemingway, without some explicit indication otherwise, such as the speaker pointing at someone else. The fact that the DRP holds for *Hemingway shot him* therefore appears to be the result of Rule B, not the cause.

Many other structures for which disjoint reference is not presumed are presented in (34):

- (34) (a) The author is (identical to) the author.
- (b) Two is equal to the square root of four.
- (c) Deep Throat turned out to be Mark Felt.
- (d) I saw me in the mirror.
- (e) Mary saw Mary in the mirror
- (f) Mary is thinking about Mary.
- (g) Hemingway shot Hemingway.

<sup>23</sup> Following Reinhart and Reuland 1993, Ariel (2008, p. 218) restricts the DRP to “arguments” of “predicates,” where these terms are understood in a particular way. She takes the predicate in (33) to be *x shot y* rather than *x shot y’s cat*. So, Ariel takes the arguments in (33) to be *Hemingway* and *his cat*, which would invariably refer to different things. She also excludes adjuncts from predicates, and counts *d’chiel* and *with her* as adjuncts.

- (h) America should put America first.
- (i) Kim said that the doctor washed Kim.
- (j) Lingens believes Lingens to be in the library.
- (k) Only Felix voted for Felix.

Conjoint reference would be presumed in these cases, for a variety of reasons. In the case of (34)(a)–(c), the referents must be identical for the predicate to apply. In the case of (34)(d), the presumption is that the first-person pronouns are used deictically, in which case both refer independently to the speaker. In the examples with repeated terms, another strong presumption applies: that different occurrences of the same term in the same conversation have the same referent. Call this the *conjoint reference presumption*.<sup>24</sup> While this presumption is taken for granted with verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and definite descriptions, it has sometimes been denied for proper names. This may be because in examples like (34)(g), the most natural interpretation is not the most natural mode of expression. If we want to state the fact that Hemingway committed suicide, it is more natural and clearer to use *Hemingway shot himself* than *Hemingway shot Hemingway*. But if a speaker has used (34)(g), the most natural interpretation is generally that Hemingway shot himself. Unless the context made clear that the two occurrences of the name were intended to refer to different individuals, and which occurrence refers to which individual, (34)(g) would be seriously misleading. Without such stage setting, we would be very surprised to learn that the speaker meant that Patrick Hemingway shot Ernest Hemingway. In other cases, however, there may be reasons to repeat the name rather than use a reflexive. Implicatures may differ. *America should put itself first* conveys base self-interest. *America should put America first* implies a basis in patriotism and principle.<sup>25</sup> Truth conditions may even differ. In Perry's (1977, pp. 21–22) classic amnesia example, (34)(j) may be false even though Lingens believes himself to be in the library because Lingens does not realize he is Lingens. Levinson's (2000, p. 301) example (34)(k), from Reinhart (1983), may be true even though *Only Felix voted for himself* is false. In Lightfoot's (2006, p. 59) example (34)(i), *Kim said that the doctor washed her* would not capture exactly what she said if her words were "the doctor washed Kim" rather than "the doctor washed me."<sup>26</sup> In sum, Ariel's

<sup>24</sup> The DRP is therefore more accurately formulated as saying that co-arguments are presumed to be disjoint in reference unless they are reflexively marked *or identical*. Alternatively, the identity of co-arguments could be considered a special case of reflexive marking. When applied to other languages, the DRP must also be restricted to cases in which the verb is not reflexive marked. Huang (2007, p. 261) observes that in Chinese, when a verb is reflexive-marked by an affix, a nonreflexive pronoun must corefer with the subject.

<sup>25</sup> A Google search turned up the following gem: *There is one simple reason why America should put America first, and that is because America is America....*

<sup>26</sup> These facts present a problem for Chomsky's (1995, pp. 96–97) treatment of binding condition C: "An r-expression must be free." Chomsky marks *John<sub>i</sub> criticized John<sub>i</sub>* as ungrammatical, and takes it to violate Rule C. It does not violate Rule C if binding is properly understood as anaphoric linkage rather than mere conjoint reference. For, names cannot be used anaphorically. Moreover, there is nothing ungrammatical about *John<sub>i</sub> criticized John<sub>j</sub>*. Variants on Evans's (1980) example show this: *If everyone criticized John, then John criticized John* and *If John criticized everyone, then John criticized John* are grammatical and true when the same John is the referent. Horn (2008,



(2008, p 219) conclusion that “our utterances consist of clauses where nonpossessor arguments refer to distinct participants almost invariably” was a very hasty generalization from an insufficiently representative sample of utterances.

Even though the DRP does not hold for the predicates and co-arguments in (34), Rule B does hold for the structures. The pronouns in (35) cannot refer back to the subjects, except in (35)(i) where the subject is outside the local domain:

- (35) (a) The author is (identical to) him.
- (b) Two is equal to it.
- (c) Deep Throat turned out to be him.
- (d) I saw him in the mirror.
- (e) Mary saw her in the mirror
- (f) Mary is thinking about her.
- (g) Hemingway shot him.
- (h) America should put it first.
- (i) Kim said that the doctor washed her.
- (j) Lingsen believes him to be in the library.
- (k) Only Felix voted for him.

The DRP again appears to be a consequence of Rule B, not the cause.

The derivation of the DRP and Rule B from the I-principle is also spurious. Both rules hold for some transitive predicates that express neither an action nor a state whose object is more typically others than oneself, as in (36):

- (36) (a) Hemingway believes the author to be gifted.
- (b) Hemingway believes him to be gifted.

The DRP and Rule B also hold for intransitive predicates like (37) even though being pleased with something is not a case in which the subject acts upon the object:

- (37) (a) Hemingway is pleased with the author.
- (b) Hemingway is pleased with him.

Finally, the DRP and Rule B hold for (38) even though the stereotypical act of shaving is the act of shaving oneself:

- (38) (a) Hemingway shaved the author.
- (b) Hemingway shaved him.

Levinson (2000, p. 239) acknowledges the problem with grooming verbs. He responds that we typically use *shaved* as a transitive verb when the patient is not the agent, and typically use it as an intransitive verb with no object when the subject is self-shaving. But the I-principle is based on what is typical of the *action* rather than the *word*.<sup>27</sup>

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p. 174) presents attested examples. The pronunciation in Evans’s example does need to give the second *John* at least as much stress as the first, not the lighter stress *himself* would normally get. Huang (2010, p. 4) proposes a Q-account of Rule C, based on the assumption that a proper name is “semantically weaker” than a reflexive. It is as problematic as the Q-account of Rule B.

<sup>27</sup> In the case of (38), the I-principle is vague as to which stereotype is relevant. Is it the stereotypical way in which Hemingway shaves Hemingway, Hemingway shaves someone, someone shaves Hemingway, or someone shaves someone? The answer does not matter in this case. Since Hemingway was not a barber and barbers are vastly outnumbered by nonbarbers, the relevant stereotype either way would be shaving oneself. (They would not be the same if *Hemingway* were changed to *The barber of Seville*.)

A critical problem for their purported derivation from the I-principle is that the DRP and Rule B are not canceled when verb phrases are modified to form contraries, such as by *not*. Grant that people stereotypically shoot other people, and that shooting oneself is atypical. Then  $x \neq y$  is typically true when  $x$  shot  $y$  is true. What then about  $x$  did not shoot  $y$ ,  $x$  failed to shoot  $y$ ,  $x$  never shoot  $y$ , and  $x$  cannot shoot  $y$ ? If shooting other people is more typical than shooting oneself, then failing to shoot other people is *less* typical than failing to shoot oneself. Hence, the interpretation of an arbitrary sentence as having referentially distinct arguments is not given to us by the I-principle (*pace* Levinson 2000, p. 328). Yet, the DRP and Rule B hold just as well for the structures in (39):

- (39) Hemingway didn't shoot him.  
       Hemingway failed to shoot him.  
       Hemingway never shoot him.  
       Hemingway cannot shoot him.

The nonlinguistic premise that “interlocutors tend to describe activities/situations in which a participant engages in some activity with other participants” (Ariel 2008, p. 216) is false. At least as often, interlocutors *deny* that a participant engaged in an activity with someone.

Levinson and Huang do not explain how the I- and Q-principles could both account for Rule B. To see a problem, let  $H^n$  be the disjoint interpretation of *Hemingway shot him*. If  $H^n$  is the stereotypical way in which *Hemingway shot him* would be true, then *Hemingway shot him* must express a proposition  $H$  that could be true in other ways too. In that case,  $H^n$  is stronger than  $H$ . So then why does the Q-principle not predict that *Hemingway shot him* Q-implicates  $\neg H^n$ —that Hemingway did not shoot someone other than Hemingway?

The I-principle is designed to explain I-implicatures, and the disjoint interpretation of (31) is, on Levinson's and Huang's view, an inference to the stereotype. It is therefore surprising that they do not describe the speaker as implicating disjoint reference when presenting their I-account, as they do when presenting their Q-account. What was shown in Sects. 4 and 5 carries over: Speakers who use a sentence like (1)(b) do not *implicate* that Hemingway shot someone other than himself, and a cancelable implicature could not account for the ungrammaticality of (1)(b) with a local antecedent. Rule B relates to what is said rather than implicated.

The most fundamental problem with the I-account is that it does not use the I-principle at all. The I-principle says that what is simply described by the particular sentence used is stereotypically exemplified. It focuses on the proposition expressed by the sentence, and the stereotypical way the *proposition* would be true. To apply the I-principle to (31)(a), we would first have to know the referents of *Hemingway* and *the author*. To apply it to (31)(b), we would first have to know whether *him* refers to Hemingway or someone else. So the I-principle as formulated cannot be used to derive the DRP or predict whether pronouns corefer with another term. The way it is formulated is essential if the goal is to account for implicatures. For an implicature is a further proposition conveyed by the act of saying what is said. Referents need to be assigned before implicatures are determined. Since the

principle from which Levinson and Huang attempted to derive Rule B was not the I-principle, it is not surprising that implicatures played no role in the account.

An I-like principle focusing on predicates that is designed to predict the referents of arguments in particular utterances would surely reference the particular predicate used in that utterance context—not the stereotype associated with predicates in general. We would need to focus on the referents speakers typically talk about when using the predicate, not those the predicate is typically true of (Ariel 2008, p. 159). That would eliminate the problem with the negations in (39). However, if such a principle were applied to utterances of the sentences in (35) and (38)(b), it would predict that the pronouns had the same referents as their subjects, contrary to Rule B. And it would predict conjoint reference in (38)(a), contrary to the DRP.

## 8 The I-Account of Rule A

Huang attributes Rule A to the I-Principle. In the case of a context like (25) *Hemingway shot* \_\_:

the interpretation of the reflexive falls under the I principle, which engenders a local coreferential reading. The interpretation of the [nonreflexive] pronoun is then due to the working of the Q-principle. (2004, p. 310; see also 1994, p. 144; 2000, pp. 214–215, 221, 224; 2007, pp. 263–264, 265; 2010, p. 4)

Huang's (2000, pp. 214–215) reason for thinking that the I-principle applies to the reflexive rather than the nonreflexive appears to be that the former tops the applicable Q-scale, *<himself, him>*. The Q-principle applies when the weaker element is chosen. This reasoning was criticized in Sects. 4 and 5. One problem is that the scalar classification was based on Rule A, begging the question. Huang (2000, p. 221; 2004, p. 308) also says that “a reflexive will be chosen if coreference is intended.” This again presupposes the rule we are trying to explain, and does not follow from the I-principle. Nothing in the I-principle implies that the reflexive corefers locally. As Huang notes:

The operation of the I principle induces an inference to a proposition that accords best with the most stereotypical and explanatory expectation given real-world knowledge. (Huang 2004, p. 299)

Given our real-world knowledge, shooting oneself is not the stereotypical case. So, if it predicted anything, the I-principle would predict that *Hemingway shot himself* means that Hemingway shot something else. As this should remind us, Huang also attributes the DRP to the expectation that one entity typically acts upon another (Sect. 7). But the I-principle cannot explain both conjoint and disjoint reference for the same structure.

The *ad hoc* nature of Huang's explanations is very evident when he attempts to use the I-principle to explain cases where he mistakenly believes Rule B does not

hold. He cites examples like (7) *Giuanin a parla sempre d'chiel* and (40), in which only a nonreflexive pronoun can be used with the main subject as antecedent:

(40) John says that Maria loves him.

[B]ecause no reflexive is available as a possible candidate to indicate referentiality, in accordance with the referentiality hierarchy (8.31) a pronoun is used instead. Consequently, there is no Q/Horn-scale ⟨reflexive, pronoun⟩ to prevent the pronoun going under the I-principle, which gives rise to a locally coreferential interpretation. (Huang 2007, p. 266)

But then there is no way of accounting for the cases in which *him* is used in (40) to refer to someone other than John, as it may, or for the fact that what (40) says can be expressed in Icelandic using either the reflexive *sig* or the nonreflexive *hann*.<sup>28</sup>

(41) Jon segir að Maria elski sig/hann.

If Huang's Q explanation worked for *Hemingway shot* \_\_ with *him*, it should work for (41) with *hann*. If both the reflexive and the nonreflexive "are subject to the I-implicated coreference" in (41), the same should hold for *Hemingway shot* \_\_.<sup>29</sup>

For the record, (40) and (41) are not exceptions to Rule B: The local clause for the pronoun is the subordinate clause, not the main clause. The reflexive cannot be used with *John* as antecedent because of Rule A; so Huang is again assuming the rule he is trying to explain. The fact that *sig* can have *Jon* as a long-distance antecedent in (41) shows that Rule A does not hold for this structure in Icelandic. So, if the I-principle explained (41), it would not explain Rule A. Huang evidently mispoke when he described the pronoun as having a locally coreferential interpretation in (40), for in a later work he correctly classifies (41) as having a long-distance reflexive, and goes on to offer an M-account:

The use of long-distance reflexives is accountable in terms of the M-principle. Since the grammar allows the unmarked regular pronoun to be employed to encode co-reference, the speaker will use it if such a reading is intended, as in [(41)]. On the other hand, if the unmarked regular pronoun is not used, but the marked long-distance reflexive is employed instead, then an M-implicature will be licensed. The implicature is that not only co-reference but logophoricity as well is intended by the speaker. (Huang 2010, p. 4)

I argued in Sect. 6 that reflexives do not convey logophoricity. Furthermore, if the neo-Gricean Q-account of Rule B were valid, the Q-principle should similarly imply that the choice of the simple pronoun *hinn* over the reflexive *sig* in (41) Q-implicates that the reflexive could *not* be used and thus implicate disjoint reference. Even if it is taken as given that the "unmarked" pronoun corefers, and that the use of the "marked" reflexive indicates a "marked" or abnormal situation, as per the M-principle, that provides no reason to think that logophoricity is conveyed. It is normal for a person to have a first-person point of view.

As he should if he uses the I-principle to account for the interpretation of sentences containing reflexive pronouns, Huang (2010, p. 3) does say that they

<sup>28</sup> Source: Huang 2007, p. 265.

<sup>29</sup> Huang says that the reflexive would be used in (41) to indicate some sort of unexpectedness. That may be true, but it does nothing to make the proposed accounts of conjoint and disjoint reference work.

I-implicate a coreferential interpretation. This is as mistaken as the claim discussed in Sect. 4 that  $\Sigma(him)$  implicates  $-\Sigma(himself)$ . *Himself* is indexical, referring to different men in different contexts of use. When used in *Hemingway shot himself*, it refers to Hemingway. So a speaker using this sentence *says* that Hemingway shot Hemingway. This is not something the speaker *implicates*. There is nothing else the speaker says *by which* he implicates that Hemingway shot Hemingway. In particular, the speaker does not implicate that Hemingway shot Hemingway by saying that Hemingway shot some man. On the contrary, the speaker will typically implicate that Hemingway shot some man by saying that Hemingway shot himself.

## 9 The M-Account of Rule A

Levinson uses the I-principle to predict disjoint reference and Rule B, as we saw in Sect. 7. He uses the M-principle to account for Rule A:

First note that reflexives are marked forms; if they are pronoun-like in grammatical category, they tend to be longer, more morphologically complex than ordinary pronouns (cf. *himself* with *him*).... Thus, what the marked, prolix forms indicate is that the normal, stereotypical scenario associated with a transitive clause does not in fact obtain—notice is served by M-implicature that the I-inference to the stereotype is not intended. If the stereotype is disjoint reference for arguments, then the M-implicature is (by Horn’s 1984 division of pragmatic labor) to the complement of that interpretation, namely to coreference. Hence (given that, by our projection rules for implicatures, M-implicatures cancel any rival I-implicatures) we derive the Condition A-like pattern for marked pronouns, so-called Anaphors. (Levinson 2000, p. 331)<sup>30</sup>

Levinson’s explanation has multiple problems. First, there is again nothing in the I- or M-principles that tell us why a reflexive must have an antecedent, nor why the antecedent must be local when a long-distance antecedent is available as in (2)(a), *John admired Hemingway*. \**Mary admired himself too*, nor why the local antecedent must be c-commanding.<sup>31</sup> Explaining “coreference” is not sufficient if that is just sameness of reference.

Second, we noted in Sect. 3 that there is no basis for Levinson’s rule that M-implicatures cancel any I-implicatures. And if his rules are just taken as given, a Q-implicature should cancel the rival M-implicature. If “Hemingway shot Hemingway” is the potential M-implicature  $H^a$ , the Q-implicature  $-H^a$  should prevail. We know that is not a possible interpretation of *Hemingway shot himself*, but the neo-Gricean has no other reason to predict that the proposed M-implicature prevails.

Third, the stereotype Levinson cites here is that associated with transitive clauses in general. Rule A holds as well, however, for structures with intransitive verbs, like *Hemingway is pleased with* \_\_\_\_\_. Furthermore, what the I-principle says is that what

<sup>30</sup> See also Huang 1994, p. 125; Comrie 1998, p. 342; Levinson 2000, p. 277; Ariel 2008, pp. 235, 244–252, 253.

<sup>31</sup> For example, the principles do not predict that *himself* cannot have *Bob* as its antecedent in *Ed painted Bob’s wife with himself*.

is simply described by *the particular sentence used* is stereotypically exemplified. In many cases, the stereotype for the action or relation expressed by the particular predicate used is *conjoint* reference, as in (42) whether the predicate is transitive or intransitive:

- (42) (a) John shaved \_\_\_\_.  
 (b) John saw \_\_\_\_ in the mirror.  
 (c) John is identical to \_\_\_\_.  
 (d) John prides \_\_\_\_ on doing a good job.  
 (e) John laughed \_\_\_\_ silly.

So by Levinson's reasoning, the I-principle should predict conjoint reference when the blank is filled by *him* in (42) and the M-principle should predict disjoint reference when filled by *himself*. Yet we find Rule A holding just as well as for contexts like (25).

Levinson's reasoning correctly predicts a conjoint reading for (9) *Bob brought Alice with him*, and as a result incorrectly predicts a disjoint reading for the defective *Bob brought Alice with himself*. Moreover, there are cases like (43) where neither conjoint nor disjoint reference is stereotypical:

- (43) (a) Mary only associates with people like \_\_\_\_.  
 (b) Mary is ashamed of \_\_\_\_.<sup>32</sup>

Yet *himself* in (43) must have *Mary* as its antecedent. For the same reason, Levinson's explanation fails to explain why the reflexive pronoun must corefer with an anaphoric antecedent in cases as diverse as those in (44):

- (44) (a) Hemingway shot himself.  
 (b) Mary regrets that the policewoman gave Jack and herself a ticket.  
 (c) Jack thought "Mary loves Bob and myself."  
 (d) I dreamed I was Brigitte Bardot and I kissed myself.

Whereas (44)(a) and (b) could be covered by different grammatical rules given that their syntax differs, a neo-Gricean explanation that explains (44)(a) should also explain (b). The syntactic difference between the sentences is not a factor given the neo-Gricean rules.

Fourth, the fact that the reflexive has the same function in (42)(d) and (e) even though the nonreflexive cannot be used shows that the word choice is not what accounts for Rule A. Even when there is a choice, the relative prolixity of the selection is not what matters. For Rule A sometimes holds even when the reflexive pronoun is shorter and morphologically less complex. Consider the Latin translations of *Hemingway shot himself/him*:

- (45) (a) Hemingway se iecit.  
 (b) Hemingway eum iecit.

<sup>32</sup> Huang (2004, p. 307) says that "emotions such as being ashamed/frightened/proud are typical examples of self-directed action." *Mary is ashamed* is indeed true only if Mary is ashamed of herself; so being ashamed (simpliciter) is self-directed. But Mary can also be ashamed of her children, and being ashamed of others is no less typical than being ashamed of oneself.

*Se* is the reflexive pronoun in the accusative case. *Eum* is the accusative case of *is* (“he”), with characteristic accusative *-um* ending. *Se* must be bound by *Hemingway* in (45), *eum* cannot be.<sup>33</sup> The fact that reflexives *tend* to be more complex across languages cannot explain why the Latin reflexive must have a local antecedent. There is no reason to think, then, that the relative length of reflexives in English has anything to do with their obeying rule A.

Fifth, Levinson says that “If the stereotype is disjoint reference for arguments, then the M-implicature is... to the complement of that interpretation, namely to coreference.” What does “the complement” mean here? Huang (2004, p. 303) takes it to mean the *negation*—the *absolute* complement. In that case, the thesis would be that (46)(a) implicates (46)(b):

- (46) (a) Hemingway shot himself.  
 (b) Hemingway did not shoot someone else.

But the hypothesis that (46)(a) has (46)(b) as an implicature is implausible and fails to account for the coreferential meaning of (46)(a) (cf. Sect. 4).

Levinson, in contrast, appears to mean the *relative* complement. He seems to think that *Hemingway shot himself* and *Hemingway shot him* both express the proposition that Hemingway shot someone (S). He takes Hemingway shooting someone other than Hemingway ( $S^n$ ) to be the normal way in which S would be true, and takes Hemingway shooting himself ( $S^a$ ) to be the abnormal way of shooting someone.  $S^a$  is not equivalent to  $\neg S^n$ , for both  $S^a$  and  $S^n$  are false if S is false.  $S^a$  and  $S^n$  are complementary as well as incompatible only conditional on S being true. Levinson thus seems to be claiming that (47)(a) M-implicates (47)(b):

- (47) (a) Hemingway shot himself  
 (b) Hemingway shot Hemingway.

(47)(b) accurately expresses what a speaker would mean by uttering (47)(a). The problem lies in describing this as an *implicature*, and specifically, as a *conversational* implicature. An implicature is something meant *but not said*. When someone utters (47)(a), they *say* that Hemingway shot a specific person, Hemingway. The proposition that (47)(a) expresses in any context of utterance is the proposition H that is true iff Hemingway shot Hemingway. There is nothing *else* the speaker has said *by which he implied H*. In particular, *Hemingway shot some man* is not what the speaker said. The speaker made a more specific statement than that, which would not be true if Hemingway shot Fitzgerald but not Hemingway, and would be a lie if the speaker knew it.

Furthermore, since conversational implicatures depend on features of the conversational context, they can be canceled. Yet, there is no context in which a speaker can utter (47)(a) and not mean (47)(b). *Hemingway shot himself, but did not shoot Hemingway* would be nonsensical. When given proof that Hemingway only shot Fitzgerald, someone uttering (47)(a) could not defend himself by insisting that he did not mean to suggest that Hemingway shot himself. A conversational implicature cannot explain why a reflexive pronoun *must* have a local antecedent in contexts like (47)(a).

<sup>33</sup> French provides another example: *se* versus *lui* “him” (Ariel 2008, p. 228).

Levinson (2000, pp. 327, 330) seems to agree that Rule A is “firmly grammaticized” in English and other “A-first” languages, and suggests that the I-account of Rule A might work for other “B-first” languages. But given that implicatures are cancelable, the account could only work for languages in which there are no sentences in which a reflexive pronoun is *required* to have an antecedent in a local domain. But then Rule A does not hold for that language.

Finally, unlike the Q-account of Rule B, the M account of Rule A is not based on the premise that *himself* is semantically stronger than *him* (Sect. 5). An incompatible but equally erroneous assumption replaces it: that *shooting himself* and *shooting him* are *equivalent* predicates:

The central observation is that M-implicatures seem to be essentially parasitic on corresponding I-implicatures: whatever an *unmarked* expression U would I-implicate the marked alternative (**denotational synonym**) M will implicate the *complement* of U’s denotation. (Levinson 2000, p. 137, bold added)

The model, recall, is provided by:

- (48) (a) John was able to solve the problem.  
 (b) John had the ability to solve the problem.

The two predicates in (48) arguably have the same denotation: the set of all people for whom solving the problem was a possibility. Consequently, both (48)(a) and (b) *state* A, that John is a member of this set. Yet (48)(a) implicates that John is a member of a subset of this denotation: those who not only could but did solve the problem ( $A^n$ ). (48)(b) implicates that John is a member of the relative complement of that set: those who could but did not solve the problem ( $A^a$ ). Levinson optimistically takes success as stereotypical. So  $A^n$  is classified as an I-implicature and  $A^a$  as an M-implicature. Adding *but did not* to (48)(a) is consistent, and cancels the implicature.

*Shot himself* and *shot him*, in contrast, are not equivalent predicates. Neither is equivalent to *shot some man*. The extension of *shot some man* is the set of all individuals who shot at least one man. The denotation of *shot himself* is plausibly the set of all men who shot themselves. But *shot him* has no denotation independent of a context of use. It has different denotations in different contexts. In a context in which *him* refers to Fitzgerald, the denotation of *shot him* is the set of all people who shot Fitzgerald. In this context, the denotations of *shot himself* and *shot him* are not identical: the former applies to many, the latter to none. In a context in which *him* refers to Hemingway, *shot him* applies only to Hemingway while *shot himself* applies to many others as well.

## 10 Ariel’s Functional Principle

Ariel’s explanations of pronoun use make no reference to implicature. But like Huang’s and Levinson’s, the fundamental factor is expectations of conjoint or disjoint reference:



what lies behind the Binding Conditions is a pattern of expectations, based on our assumptions about discourse entities.... Simply put, interlocutors tend to describe activities/situations in which a participant engages in some activity with other participants, rather than with herself.... The idea then is that regardless of how the world is, human discourse is such that most events referred to involve distinct entities. If so, interlocutors would tend to assume that this is the case, and where not clearly indicated by the speaker, they would pragmatically infer it. (Ariel 2008, pp. 216–217)

Ariel's conclusion here is the DRP, and the justification provided resembles the one discussed in Sect. 7. She appears to use the DRP to explain Rule B:

Our utterances consist of clauses where nonpossessor arguments refer to distinct participants almost invariably. It's safe to assume that interlocutors would draw this interpretation as a pragmatic inference, then. (Ariel 2008, p. 219)

However, what she actually uses to explain pronoun use is her “*functional principle*.” It is formulated as a pair of rules, which I call *RC* and *NC*:

The functional principle predicts that [RC] where there are solid expectations for disjointness, coreference should be marked by a reflexive, and [NC] where there are strong expectations for coreference, [nonreflexive] pronouns should be used to indicate coreference. (Ariel 2008, p. 235)<sup>34</sup>

Rule RC states that when coreference is “marked” (i.e., unexpected), the pronoun should be “marked” (reflexive) to express coreference. Rule NC states that when coreference is unmarked, the pronoun should be unmarked to express coreference. “Coreference” here means conjoint reference. I take a third rule, ND, to be implicit in Ariel's principle:

[ND] Where there are no strong indications for coreference, nonreflexive pronouns should be used to indicate disjoint reference.

So, when coreference is marked, the unmarked pronoun should be used to express disjoint reference.

The DRP applies to complete sentences (predicates with terms), and specifies the default interpretation of its terms. Ariel focuses on predicates or sentence forms, like *x shot y* or (49):

- (49) (a) Hemingway shot \_\_\_\_.  
 (b) Hemingway did not shoot \_\_\_\_.

Ariel would say that there are solid expectations for disjointness with (49; i.e., coreference is marked), because interlocutors tend to talk about activities in which one participant shoots or does not shoot another. By RC, *himself* should be used in (49)

<sup>34</sup> See also Ariel 2008, pp. 226, 238, 242, 244, 252, 253; Comrie 1998. Ariel sometimes gives a weaker formulation, describing which pronoun is *preferred* rather than which *should be* used (see e.g., Ariel 2008, pp. 228, 229, 233, 236–241, 244). Only the weaker formulation conforms to the observation that *himself* is more common than *him* in *John carried a picture of \_\_\_\_* when coreference is intended. This observation does little to confirm either formulation, though. For, Ariel (2008, p. 248) also notes that *himself* is more frequent than *him* in *John took it upon \_\_\_\_ to act*, even though coreference is expected. Moreover, a preference rule cannot explain rules specifying what is obligatory or prohibited.

to indicate conjoint reference. By ND, *him* should be used to indicate disjoint reference. Ariel's functional principle thus appears to yield some predictions of Rules A and B. One virtue of Ariel's formulation is that Rule RC can predict a reflexive in both (49)(a) and (49)(b). Levinson faced the problem, recall, that if shooting others is expected, not shooting others is unexpected. Ariel focuses not on "how the world is," but on whether the speaker is expected to refer to the same or different entities (see Ariel 2008, p. 159).

Ariel's focus on expectations about discourse rather than the world, however, and predicates rather than sentences, prevents any derivation of Rule NC from the I-Principle ("what is simply described is stereotypically exemplified"). One rationale Ariel (2008, pp. 228–229) offers for Rule NC is that "where coreference is expected, there is no need to counteract the disjointness inference, and hence reflexive pronouns should be less prevalent.... A regular pronoun may be appropriate to indicate coreference in such cases." But that only supports a prediction that the nonreflexive is *more likely*. Ariel also points to (50)(a) as evidence for Rule NC, arguing that:

coreference is not just presumed to be the default case, it is in fact the only option. Hence the functional principle predicts that despite the fact that the prepositional object is a co-argument, a pronoun, rather than a reflexive, is to be used. (Ariel 2008, p. 240)

- (50) (a) Bob brought Alice with him/\*himself.  
 (b) Bob made Alice go without him/\*himself.

We noted in Sect. 2 that (50)(a) is a structure for which Rules A and B do not hold; indeed, their opposites hold. That the functional principle has nothing to do with the requirement for the simple pronoun in (50)(a) is shown by (50)(b), where *him* is similarly required when anaphoric coreference is intended even though conjoint reference is not the only option. Neither conjoint nor disjoint reference is strongly expected.

In support of Rule RC, Ariel offers the following explanation for (51)(a):

Since what we have here is marked coreference (*work with* is an other-directed predicate), in order to create that reading a reflexive must be used. (Ariel 2008, p. 236)

- (51) (a) Tom works with him.  
 (b) Tom shaves him.

Both of Ariel's claims about (51)(a) may be true here. But the assumption that one fact explains the other is erroneous. For coreference, a reflexive is often required (as *shaved* and the diverse predicates in (35) show) or permissible (as *The Dean thought of<sup>1</sup> Kathy I want people like<sup>1</sup> yourself on the committee* and the structures in (10) show) when coreference is *unmarked* (cf. Ariel 2008, p. 249).

Ariel (2008, p. 236) also cites a search of the Web corpus in support of RC, which turned up nothing but reflexive pronouns after *except for*, as in (52)(a):

- (52) (a) She blamed no one except for herself.  
 (b) She blamed no one except her.  
 (c) She blamed no one but her.

Since Ariel takes talking about blaming others to be expected, such findings "are of course precisely what the functional principle predicts." Yet *her* is perfectly

grammatical and natural in place of *herself* in this context, and judging from a Google search, is very common after *but* and *except* without *for*.

Ariel (2008, pp. 247–248) maintains that the functional principle is responsible for the pattern of *about* objects, which she classifies as adjuncts:

- (53) (a) Mary is thinking about \_\_\_\_.  
 (b) Mary is talking about \_\_\_\_.  
 (c) Mary is overly concerned about \_\_\_\_.

Rules A and B apply paradigmatically to the forms in (53).<sup>35</sup> It is dubious, however, that RC or ND apply. It would be hard to make a case that it is stereotypical for people in general to think and talk about others rather than themselves. It would be especially hard for certain states, like being overly concerned, and for certain individuals and contexts. If Mary is someone we expect to talk about herself, Rule NC predicts that a nonreflexive pronoun should be used to indicate coreference. Use of *her* is grammatical in (53), however, only if it does not have *Mary* as its antecedent. Furthermore, the functional principle cannot possibly account for the grammaticality of both sentences in (54):

- (54) (a) Giuanin always talks about himself.  
 (b) Giuanin a parla sempre d'chiel. (Piedmontese)

If it is assumed, plausibly, that people typically talk about others, then Rule RC predicts the reflexive in (54)(a), but the use of the nonreflexive in (54)(b) is contrary to ND. If it is assumed that people typically talk about themselves, Rule NC predicts the nonreflexive in (54)(b) while the reflexive in (54)(a) violates RC.

Perhaps the most serious problem for Rules NC and RC is presented by the predicates in (42). Nonreflexive pronouns cannot be not used for anaphoric coreference in *John shaved \_\_\_\_*, and can be used to indicate disjoint reference, even though coreference is expected; we can and do use the “marked” reflexive even though coreference “unmarked.”<sup>36</sup> Ariel (2008, pp. 232, 243–244) acknowledges that coreference is unmarked with grooming verbs, and takes as confirmation the fact that reflexives occur less commonly with *shave* than with verbs of bodily harm like *cut*. But that is because English speakers more commonly use *shave* as an intransitive verb with no object when they want to describe self-shaving.<sup>37</sup>

Ariel's rules are formulated as predictions about what pronoun speakers “should” use. *Should* has a well-known ambiguity. In its descriptive sense, it has *will* and *is likely to* as synonyms. In its normative sense, it has *ought* as a synonym, and is

<sup>35</sup> Reinhart and Reuland's (1993) formulations do not apply to adjuncts, as Ariel (2008, p. 238) notes. But it is not clear why *about* objects should be classified as adjuncts rather than arguments.

<sup>36</sup> Ariel (2008, p. 243) also proposes a cross-linguistic hypothesis: “Dutch has a variation between a relatively unmarked *zich* form and a more marked *zichzelf* form... whereas self-directed verbs may take either form, other-directed verbs must take the marked form.... In general, it's never the case that grooming verbs employ a more marked reflexive form than verbs of bodily harm within the same language...” (see also Huang 2007, pp. 262–263). If this is confirmed for the large number and bewildering variety of natural languages, it would be a remarkable fact.

<sup>37</sup> Ariel (2008, pp. 247–248) later grants that transitive grooming verbs are governed by structural principles, Rule A and B. See Sect. 11.

intermediate between *may* and *must*. The rationale and evidence Ariel offers for the functional principle are relevant only if it is a descriptive claim. But the grammatical facts we set out to explain concern what is permissible or prohibited. Even if the probability were 100% that speakers will use a reflexive in (52), that would not entail that a nonreflexive is impermissible. Conversely, speakers sometimes speak ungrammatically. The functional principle may predict that a reflexive pronoun is likely in (49) to indicate coreference and a simple pronoun to indicate disjoint reference. But that does not entail that a reflexive *must* be used for coreference and the simple pronoun *cannot* be. So the functional principle does not account for the normativity of grammar.

The principle also says nothing about anaphoric linkage. Yet, as we saw in Sect. 2, what is required in (49) is that a reflexive have a local antecedent, and that a nonreflexive lack a local antecedent. Contrary to NC, a simple pronoun can be used to indicate conjoint reference even though disjoint reference is expected if it is used demonstratively, as in (55)(a):

- (55) (a) <sup>1</sup>Hemingway<sub>1</sub> shot <sup>2</sup>him<sub>1</sub> (pointing at a picture of Hemingway).  
 (b) \*<sup>1</sup>Hemingway<sub>1</sub> shot <sup>1</sup>him<sub>1</sub>.

Rule NC consequently fails to explain what is wrong with (55)(b). The problem is not that *him* and *Hemingway* have the same referent. It is that *him* has *Hemingway* as its antecedent. Another way to see that the expectation of disjoint reference is irrelevant is to imagine a context of use in which coreference is expected even though speakers generally talk about people shooting others. This is particularly easy to do in this case since Hemingway's suicide is widely known and still a subject of discussion. Rules A and B hold for *shot* even in such a context. Syntactic relations are relevant, not actual or expected relations among discourse entities. A pragmatic explanation is impossible because whether Rules A and B hold for a linguistic structure is independent of the nonlinguistic context of utterance.

## 11 Diachronic Accounts

The neo-Gricean explanations of Rules A and B so far have been synchronic and principle based. One problem, recall, is that implicatures, presumptions, default inferences, and neo-Gricean principles are cancelable or defeasible. Rules A and B have exceptions, but are not cancelable where they hold. One way neo-Griceans might respond is to shift to diachronic explanation. Instead of claiming that a nonreflexive pronoun cannot have a local antecedent because  $\Sigma(\textit{him})$  implicates  $-\Sigma(\textit{himself})$ , they might instead claim that Rule B resulted from grammaticalization of these implicatures in earlier stages of English, in much the same way live metaphors have often become GCIs and then idioms. What is now direct, conventional, and obligatory was once indirect, unconventional, and optional (cf. Davis 1998, § 6.2; 2010; 2011). Levinson (2000, pp. 263–265, 328, 362–363) and Huang (2000, p. 330; 2007, p. 271) themselves suggest a diachronic perspective, and Ariel (2008,

Chap. 6) develops it at length. Once it is recognized that GCIs are conventions, and consequently not derivable from general principles, the overdetermination and conflict problems go away. It would not be surprising that an implicature became conventional with *Hemingway shot him* but not with *Mary ignored the blood on her*. Nor would it be surprising that *John shaved him* acquired a Q-implicature when it could naturally have had an I-implicature. Conventions are arbitrary to some extent. Ariel notes many ways in which arbitrary grammatical conventions play a role in pronoun use:

some languages do, others do not have reflexive markers; in some they are optional in others they are obligatory; in some languages reflexive marked coreference is obligatorily to the subject, in others it is not so restricted; in some languages the reflexive can function as a subject, in others it cannot; in some it occurs for possessors in others it does not; some languages extend the use of their reflexives beyond the finite clause, etc. (Ariel 2008, p. 245; see also 226–227)

It should be equally unsurprising that the nonreflexive pronoun is permissible in (54)(b) when it is impermissible in the English translation.

If they went diachronic, Levinson and Huang would have to give up their claim to have redistributed the division of labor between grammar and pragmatics. The diachronic account grants that today's constraints are syntactic. What it would explain is how those syntactic constraints came into existence. The hypothesis would be that  $\Sigma(him)$  used to (Q- or I-) implicate  $-\Sigma(himself)$  but no longer does so because the implicature was grammaticized. The critical obstacle to such a diachronic account, however, is that there is no more reason to think that  $-\Sigma(himself)$  was an implicature of  $\Sigma(him)$  in the past than there is to think it today.

Ariel identifies the methodological principle she applies to diachronic explanation:

Modern English can be used to explain the grammaticization process English underwent in the fifteenth century, because the discourse patterns which drove the grammar then are still with us now. The relevant pragmatic motivation here is the inference that entities we tend to refer to as engaged with each other in some event which is encoded within a linguistic clause tend to be distinct. This interpretation must have been a recurrent pragmatic inference in the past, just as it is in the present. If so, speakers were prompted to indicate cases where this inference was not appropriate. It is this indication that initiated the grammaticization of what are now known as reflexive pronouns. (Ariel 2008, pp. 212–213)

[O]nce a grammatical convention sets in, the motivation behind it may become less or even not relevant at all, automatic processes (such as the binding conditions) taking place regardless, and even in spite of the original motivation. (Ariel 2008, p. 246)

Ariel hypothesizes that prior use governed by pragmatic principles transformed diachronically into syntactic conventions. Rules A and B are the “grammaticized version of the functional principle” (2008, p. 248).<sup>38</sup>

Ariel's “uniformitarian” methodology for explaining diachronic processes is valid, and led among other things to the nineteenth-century revolution in our understanding of geology. But Ariel misidentifies the processes at work today. We saw earlier that Ariel's functional rules RC, NC, and ND are false and do not predict

<sup>38</sup> More precisely, Ariel (2008, p. 248, 253) believes grammaticized structural principles account synchronically for pronoun use in most contexts, with the functional principle accounting for the rest, including *about* objects (but recall (53) and (54)).

or explain where reflexive as opposed to nonreflexive pronouns are used today (Sect. 10). Moreover, RC could not have applied before reflexives existed.

The DRP, in contrast, is operative today. There is a strong and very general presumption, justified by the actual usage propensities of modern English speakers, that different co-arguments of a predicate are disjoint in reference unless they are reflexively marked or identical. It is reasonable to assume that the DRP operated in the past as it does today, perhaps with some difference in its range. Section 7 showed that the prohibition on nonlocal antecedents in Modern English cannot be derived from that presumption, which cannot be derived from the I-principle. But perhaps, as Ariel (2008, § 6.1.1 and 6.2.3) also suggests, the DRP explains Rule B diachronically:

Even though this generalization is extralinguistic, pragmatic tendencies often take a more defined, in fact, grammatical shape in due course. It is quite conceivable that the presumption of distinct participants got narrowed down to exactly the terms that Reinhart and Reuland use [to formulate their Rule B]. (Ariel 2008, p. 217)

What Ariel is suggesting in the first sentence here is that a pragmatic presumption of disjoint reference transformed into a grammatical requirement. Such a transformation is conceivable, as she says. But that is not what happened with nonreflexive pronouns. For one thing, they may still have conjoint referents, as we have seen (recall (55)(a)). What Rule B prohibits is their having conjoint referents in a certain way—through having local antecedents. A problem on the other end of history will be detailed shortly.

Sections 8 and 9 showed that Rule A cannot be explained synchronically by the I- or M-principles as Levinson and Huang maintain. Levinson also suggests a diachronic account, based on Visser's (1963) history. Ariel (2008, Chap. 6) develops it at length. In Old English (<1066 AD) and Middle English (1066–1470 AD), the pronoun *hine him* could be used with or without a local antecedent. A sentence like (56) was ambiguous, and could have been used to mean that the subject stabbed either himself or someone else:

- (56) *He ofsticode hine*  
 (a) He stabbed himself.  
 (b) He stabbed him (someone else).

The accusative *selfne* was originally just an emphatic, much as *himself* functions today in *He himself is to blame*. According to Visser, *hine selfne* began to be used in place of *hine* in constructions like (56) to convey the coreferential meaning. Over time, the coreferential use of *hine selfne* increased and that of *hine* declined. The case distinction between *hine selfne* and *him selfum* was lost, and the compound lexicalized, with *himself* as the result. The preference for the reflexive pronoun strengthened until the nonreflexive became unacceptable, and no longer an option for coreference in structures like (56)(a). According to Ariel (2008, p. 223), this is a common origin for reflexives.

Levinson's and Ariel's diachronic hypothesis is that Old English operated with a presumption of disjointness, which could be defeated by the use of a pronoun with an emphatic adjunct. Once the reflexive became lexicalized:

the high correlation between cases where a reflexive is used because coreference is marked and the syntactic configuration in which the reflexive and its antecedent are co-arguments may have led to the automatic choice of a reflexive once the structural condition holds, regardless of whether the pragmatic condition holds. (Ariel 2008, p. 255; see also p. 147)

This too is a conceivable story. But Levinson and Ariel present no evidence that the presumption of disjoint reference held specifically for constructions with pronouns in Old English. This may be because Ariel did not distinguish the DRP from her functional principle, for which she did provide some evidence. Or they both may have assumed that the DRP is universal. As we saw in Sect. 7, it is not. In particular, the DRP does not hold in Modern English for constructions like (57) that permit either nonreflexive or reflexive pronouns for anaphoric coreference. The sentences have both a coreferential and a noncoreferential reading, since *her* may or may not have *Mary* as its antecedent. Ambiguity can be eliminated by using *herself* in place of *her*, which forces a coreferential reading:

- (57) (a) Mary ignored the blood on her.  
 (b) Mary regrets that the policeman gave Jack and her a ticket.

There is no presumption of disjoint reference in (57)(a) or (b). If there were, there would be little need to use a reflexive to resolve the ambiguity—speakers would be no more likely to use (57)(a) to say that Mary had blood on herself than they would be to use *Hemingway shot the author* to say that Hemingway shot himself. Given uniformitarianism, we should assume that this is what (56) was like in Old English. The DRP did not hold. Hence, ambiguity could be reduced or eliminated by using *hine selfne* instead of *hine*.

Prior to the development of reflexive pronouns in English, third-person pronouns could be used with or without local antecedents. Reflexives were optional for coreference. After the lexically specialized reflexive forms came into the language, the old forms became restricted to uses without local antecedents. Reflexives were now required for coreference. This change evidently took centuries.<sup>39</sup> Judging from (57), the DRP did not apply to nonreflexive pronouns before the change, but did apply after. There is no syntactic prohibition on conjoint reference (Sect. 2), but we do presume disjoint reference in a context like *Hemingway shot him*. This presumption is justified by what is true in large majority of cases. Nevertheless, the presumption can be defeated by evidence from particular contexts of use, such as evidence that the speaker used *him* while pointing at a picture of Hemingway, or with a long-distance antecedent that refers to him. So what appears to have happened in English is that the DRP *broadened* so that it applied to nonreflexive pronouns. This broadening of the DRP was not explained by the I-principle, and I-implicatures had nothing to do with it.

The DRP *could* have applied to nonreflexive pronouns without Rule B. If that had happened, *Hemingway shot him* would have been like *Hemingway shot the author*. The nonreflexive *him* would have been allowed to have *Hemingway* as its antecedent even though there is a strong presumption that it does not. In that case, <sup>1</sup>*Hemingway shot* <sup>1</sup>*him* would have been grammatical, but misleading unless something in the

<sup>39</sup> According to Visser 1963, cited in Levinson 2000, p. 342, the coreferential use of nonreflexive pronouns continued beyond Shakespeare's time. See also Ariel (2008, p. 227).

context indicated that *Hemingway* was the antecedent. So what the development of Rule B did was *strengthen* the DRP by eliminating one way in which it could be defeated. A presumption is strengthened when it becomes less likely to be defeated, and broadened or generalized when it becomes applicable to more linguistic forms. The DRP was both broadened and strengthened as nonreflexive pronouns evolved in English.

Instead of the DRP being responsible for Rules A and B, it appears that the common interest in clarity of expression, and therefore avoidance of ambiguity, which serves the general interest in communication, motivated the lexicalization of *himself* with Rule A. The same interest motivated the subsequent generalization of the DRP to *him*, and the Rule B restriction on the ways *him* could be used. After *himself* took on the function of anaphoric coreference, *him* specialized in other forms of reference.<sup>40</sup> The grammaticization also made word choice and interpretation easier by eliminating options, as Ariel (2008, p. 255) suggested. Given that the lexical and grammatical rules of a language are conventional, it is no surprise that different languages have different rules differentiating reflexive and nonreflexive pronouns. The same common interests can lead to different practices and rules in different communities. It would not be surprising if English grammar changed so that Rules A and B came to apply to structures like (57) (cf. Ariel 2008, p. 248).

It is clear that the need for a reflexive to unambiguously convey coreference does not arise with predicates that require conjoint reference for truth, and that among other predicates the need is greater the higher the antecedent likelihood of disjoint reference, given the context. But that pragmatic principle does not follow from or depend on neo-Gricean principles. Even with a transitive verb like *dress* that typically applies conjointly, the antecedent likelihood of disjoint reference will be high in a context in which we are discussing parents dressing children. In such a context, *dressed himself* may be needed to clearly convey coreference. Rules A and B would still serve the avoidance of ambiguity possible with a pronoun that could have either local or nonlocal antecedents even if there were no predicates that stereotypically have disjoint reference—all being like *x introduced y* rather than *x shot y*.

As support for her diachronic explanation, Ariel (2008, pp. 250–251) suggests that Rule B is breaking down under pragmatic pressure. She notes that *me* is perfectly grammatical in (58):

- (58) (a) I blame myself/me for the accident.  
 (b) I introduced myself/me to her mother.

To my ear, *me* needs to be stressed to sound correct in these examples; *myself* does not. And the reflexive is normally preferred. Ariel explains what is going on here as follows:

*Blame myself*... would have been more of a (one-participant) internal activity of self-blaming, a possible paraphrase for which is the intransitive *feel guilty*. In *blame me*, on the other hand, there are two participant roles, both the blamer and the blamee being profiled. While

<sup>40</sup> This process is only superficially similar to that by which the use of *animal* to Q-implicate *non-human* became conventional and lexicalized, resulting in the narrow sense of *animal*. The use of *animal* in the general sense did not become syntactically restricted. *Him* never had a Q-implicature, and did not acquire an additional sense.



the reflexive form tends to indicate an internal cognitive activity, the pronominal form probably involves some public, more objective act of blaming. (Ariel 2008, pp. 250–251)

It is surely mystical to suggest that *me blaming me* involves two participants whereas *me blaming myself* involves just one when they are one and the same activity. And as argued in Sect. 5, reflexives and nonreflexives differ not in logophoricity, but in the way they refer. Another explanation is no more successful:

[T]he reason why speakers are now being innovative about using pronouns where reflexives are expected is, we can hypothesize, the routinization of the reflexive pronoun, which eroded its markedness, and even its referentiality (see Ariel 2006a). (Ariel 2008, p. 252)

*Myself* is fully referential in (58)(a). And since reflexive pronouns have not become any shorter, it is unclear what Ariel meant by “markedness.” What is really going on here is not a violation of Rule B, but a nonanaphoric use. Both *I* and *me* refer deictically and independently to the speaker.

## 12 Conclusions

I have identified many problems with the attempt to explain the differences between reflexive and nonreflexive pronouns in terms of neo-Gricean pragmatic principles.

- The neo-Gricean principles do not even tend to be true, and the inference rules are unwarranted. The principles conflict, making prediction impossible.
- The principles do not predict which structures conform to Rules A and B, or explain why they do. The same is true of Ariel’s functional principle.
- The differences between reflexive and nonreflexive pronouns are not differences in implicature.
- $\langle \textit{Himself}, \textit{him} \rangle$  is not a Horn scale.
- Since implicatures and pragmatic explanations are dependent on nonlinguistic features of the context of utterance, they are incapable of accounting for whether a local antecedent is required or prohibited.
- Predicting conjoint or disjoint reference is insufficient to explain whether local antecedents are required or prohibited.
- The DRP holds for a wide variety of linguistic structures, but not all. It cannot be explained by the I-principle, or explain Rule B.
- The set of linguistic structures and pronouns for which Rules A and B hold in English and other languages is too arbitrary to be described by general pragmatic principles.
- Since there is no more reason to believe that the pragmatic principles we have examined were operative in the past (other than the DRP), the proposed diachronic accounts in terms of grammaticization of pragmatically motivated usage are unsuccessful.
- The lexicalization of the reflexive pronoun in English, the grammaticalization of Rules A and B, and an increase in the scope of the DRP, all appear to have resulted from the common interest in clarity of expression and avoidance of ambiguity.

While neo-Gricean principles do not account for the differences between reflexive and nonreflexive pronouns, pragmatic factors do play an essential role in determining pronominal reference. The syntax of a language places constraints on the interpretation of pronouns, which determine among other things whether a local antecedent is required, permitted, or prohibited. The syntactic constraints differ among languages, as we have seen, and among pronouns within a language. When the syntax permits a pronoun to have more than one anaphoric antecedent, or to be used deictically or demonstratively, features of the context of utterance must determine the interpretation, including the speaker's intentions. Specifying which intentions or other contextual features are the determinants in these cases is a big task for another occasion.

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# Pragmatic Disorders and Social Functioning: A Lifespan Perspective

Louise Cummings

**Abstract** As we pass through life stages, the demands and challenges of the social domain vary enormously. The infant must quickly establish social reciprocity with others in order to ensure he/she receives food and protection from harm. The child must use whatever social interaction skills are at his disposal in order to access the friendship networks which will sustain his cognitive, social and emotional development. The adolescent is at a critical point in the construction of identity, and social skills both contribute to, and are transformed by, this important milestone in personal development. The adult faces significant social challenges in the workplace, where high-level interpersonal skills are typically a prerequisite of employment. At the same time, new social roles emerge in adulthood in the form of parenthood and through wider societal participation. In advanced adulthood, there are social challenges in the form of reduced opportunities for interaction as one's friendship network gradually declines. Also, the aging adult must address the adverse social implications of steadily diminishing physical and cognitive skills. The human lifespan, it can be seen, places a range of social demands on the individual, each of which is unique, and all of which must be confronted.

Each of these life stages in the social functioning of an individual is compromised by the presence of pragmatic disorders. This is on account of the fact that of all aspects of language, pragmatics is most closely affiliated with the communication processes upon which social relationships are constructed and maintained. This chapter takes a lifespan perspective in examining the contribution of pragmatic disorders to impairments of social functioning. This contribution varies not only with different life stages but also with different clinical disorders. The child with an autism spectrum disorder may not be successful in forging the social relationships which are the basis of friendship networks, while the adult who sustains a traumatic brain injury may experience isolation through a progressive loss of social relationships. Pragmatic disorders, which are a prominent clinical feature of clients with both these disorders, will have different social consequences in each of these scenarios. The discussion considers the factors which exacerbate and mitigate the social consequences of pragmatic disorders at different stages in the lifespan.

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## 1 Introduction

As we pass through life stages, the demands and challenges of the social domain vary enormously. The infant must quickly establish social reciprocity with others in order to ensure he receives food and protection from harm. The child must use whatever social interaction skills are at his disposal in order to access the friendship networks which will sustain his cognitive, social and emotional development. The adolescent is at a critical point in the construction of identity, and social skills both contribute to, and are transformed by, this important milestone in personal development. The adult faces significant social challenges in the workplace, where high-level interpersonal skills are typically a prerequisite of employment. At the same time, new social roles emerge in adulthood in the form of parenthood and through wider societal participation. In advanced adulthood, there are social challenges in the form of reduced opportunities for interaction as one's friendship network gradually declines. Also, the aging adult must address the adverse social implications of steadily diminishing physical and cognitive skills. The human life-span, it can be seen, places a range of social demands on the individual, each of which is unique, and all of which must be confronted.

Each of these life stages in the social functioning of an individual is compromised by the presence of pragmatic disorders. This is on account of the fact that of all aspects of language, pragmatics is most closely affiliated with the communication processes upon which social relationships are constructed and maintained. This chapter takes a lifespan perspective in examining the contribution of pragmatic disorders to impairments of social functioning. This contribution varies not only with different life stages but also with different clinical disorders. The child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) may not be successful in forging the social relationships which are the basis of friendship networks, while the adult who sustains a traumatic brain injury (TBI) may experience isolation through a progressive loss of social relationships. Pragmatic disorders, which are a prominent clinical feature of clients with both these disorders, will have different social consequences in each of these scenarios. The discussion considers the factors which exacerbate and mitigate the social consequences of pragmatic disorders at different stages in the lifespan.

The chapter unfolds as follows. Social functioning is a poorly understood concept which has multiple uses and characterizations in a clinical context. In Sect. 2, these uses are examined, and a definition of social functioning is advanced. In Sect. 3, the contribution of pragmatics to the social functioning of an individual is examined. This contribution consists in the social communication processes that pragmatics makes possible. In Sect. 4, a lifespan perspective on the impact of pragmatic disorders on the social functioning of children and adults will be developed. The following life stages will be included within this perspective: infancy, childhood and

adulthood. Several clinical disorders in which there are significant pragmatic impairments will be examined at each of these stages. Finally, in Sect. 5, the main findings of the discussion are summarized and areas for future research are indicated.

## 2 Defining Social Functioning

The title of this section might suggest that a relatively easy task lies ahead. But this impression would be misleading. For there can be few notions in clinical literature which have been so extensively used, and yet so poorly understood and characterized, as social functioning. Brissos et al. (2011) state that '[d]espite the recent widespread use of the term "social functioning" there is limited consensus even about its definition'. One source of difficulty is the fact that the term has been used interchangeably with a number of other social concepts, among which Brissos et al. include social performance, social adjustment, social dysfunction, social adaptation and social competence. For other investigators, some aspects of social functioning are more easily defined than others. Ordoñana et al. (2013) state that:

Although the term 'social functioning' is frequently used, it is often ill defined. Though we can usually agree on what constitutes negative, or maladaptive social behaviour, clear delineation of the range of positive social behaviour is more elusive. (p. 1191)

Yet, it is not clear that researchers do, in fact, agree on what constitutes poor social functioning. For some, it is the inability to maintain independent living. For others, it is the lack of social interaction with family members and friends. For still other researchers, poor social functioning is indicated by the lack of part-time or full-time employment. All of these aspects (and more) are combined in the following 'global' definition of social functioning advanced by Brissos et al. (2011):

Social functioning has been defined globally as the capacity of a person to function in different societal roles such as homemaker, worker, student, spouse, family member or friend. The definition also takes account of an individual's satisfaction with their ability to meet these roles, to take care of themselves, and the extent of their leisure and recreational activities. (p. 1191)

The broad, even amorphous, conceptions of social functioning advanced by Brissos and others has resulted in a proliferation of clinical measures of this concept which vary widely in terms of format and content. Social functioning is routinely assessed in a clinical context through the use of questionnaires and scales. These may be completed by clients, clinicians and family members after or during a period of observation and/or interview:

Social functioning has been measured as a dimension in general quality of life questionnaires (often with only one or two questions), as a functional area with specific scales (mainly in psychotic patients) or even by discrete indicators that can comprise very different concepts, such as employment or facial expression recognition. (Ordoñana et al. 2013, p. 1191)

Within each of these measures, the functional skills assessed are often so wide-ranging in nature that it is not clear what they are intended to exclude. For example,

Lenior et al. (2001) measured social functioning in 73 adults with schizophrenia by combining scores from the life chart schedule (World Health Organization 1992) in the following domains:

[L]iving in institutions for psychiatric patients (months in mental hospitals and/or sheltered homes); structural activities (months of full-time, part-time or voluntary work, full-time study and/or housekeeping); help from the family (sum score of help with activities of daily living, accompanying to out-patient services, checking intake of medication and management of care). (p. 54)

Understandably, different conceptions of social functioning have arisen to reflect the functional impairments of specific clinical populations (in Lenior et al.'s case, clients with schizophrenia). But even within this inevitable variation, there is a clear sense in which the ability to function in the workplace places social demands on the individual in a way that the management of medication does not. In striving to assess functional impairments in their clients, it would appear that clinicians have lost sight of the distinctly *social* character of some of those impairments.

What can we derive from this briefest of examinations of how the concept of social functioning is employed in a clinical context? There are three conclusions which immediately come to mind. Firstly, social functioning is construed so widely that it is taken to subsume every aspect of daily functioning. We have already seen that there are aspects of daily functioning which are not in any meaningful sense social in nature, and which should not be included in a definition of social functioning. Secondly, through their exclusive focus on aspects of performance, clinical definitions omit all mention of the cognitive, linguistic and other skills which make social functioning possible. This omission is a deficiency of these definitions, as it is these skills which must be targeted by clinical interventions for impaired social functioning. Thirdly, social functioning is characterized (appropriately, it might be added) as an adaptive behaviour which permits individuals to access societal roles (e.g. homemaker) and to undertake a range of activities associated with those roles (e.g. employment). To be satisfactory, any alternative definition of social functioning must retain the thrust of the third conclusion, while remedying the issues which give rise to the first two conclusions. It is with these constraints in mind that the following definition of social functioning is proposed:

Social functioning is an important adaptive behaviour which permits an individual to fulfil societal roles and to undertake the tasks associated with those roles. Roles may include being a parent to a child, an employee in a place of work, or a regular visitor to an elderly person. Tasks associated with these roles may include seeking medical assistance when a child is ill, reporting to a line manager in a work context and assisting an elderly person with shopping. Social functioning includes communicative and non-communicative elements and is dependent on a complex array of cognitive, linguistic and other skills.

The adult with schizophrenia who is unable to fulfil his or her role as a parent to a child has impaired social functioning. Similarly, the adult who develops aphasia, following a stroke, and cannot provide work reports to a line manager has impaired social functioning. Importantly, this definition emphasizes the contribution of communication to social functioning, while not privileging communication (there are also 'non-communicative elements'), and characterizes social functioning as emergent on the interplay of a wide range of language and cognitive skills. These features of the definition warrant further consideration.

Definitions of social functioning rarely mention the role of language and communication in this adaptive behaviour. This is despite the fact that it is through communication that social relationships and roles are enacted and sustained. In this way, the social role of parent has its earliest manifestations in the dyadic exchanges between a mother and her pre-linguistic infant. Similarly, the social role of an employee is continually reinforced through spoken, written and non-verbal communications with one's work colleagues. It is to satisfy a social imperative, namely, the need of human beings to live and work together, that language and communication skills have evolved. Moreover, it is social functioning that is most adversely affected when there is any diminution of those skills. Notwithstanding the reliance of social functioning on communication, the former notion involves a range of other capabilities beyond the ability to engage in communication. Specifically, social functioning requires an individual to act in goal-directed ways, to establish goals which are appropriate to the needs of society and which do not contravene the rights of others, and to pursue only those courses of action which are effective in achieving goals. The cognitive, moral and technical capabilities that these aspects of social functioning require are in addition to the use of communication skills. In short, communication is one component, albeit a very important one, of a broader concept of social functioning which also spans several non-communicative domains.

It is clear from the discussion thus far that social functioning is emergent upon skills in a number of domains. In Chap. 7 of Cummings (2014a), those domains were characterized in relation to social communication as (1) language pragmatics, (2) social perception and (3) social cognition. Skills in certain of these domains also make a contribution to the non-communicative elements of social functioning. For example, a capacity to perceive and attribute significance to a range of non-verbal behaviours (social perception) and to represent the mental states that other people entertain (social cognition) is at least as important to the understanding of human behaviour in non-communicative contexts as it is in communicative contexts. However, the domain of particular relevance to the current chapter is language pragmatics. Pragmatics contributes to the social functioning of an individual through the social communication processes that it makes possible. These processes range from the use of greetings, the starting point in any social interaction, to the employment of humour and sarcasm, two high-level language forms which play an important role in the establishment of social rapport with others. In the next section, we examine the specific social functions performed by pragmatic aspects of language. We then turn, in Sect. 4, to consider the different ways in which social functioning may be compromised by impairment of pragmatic language skills. The findings of clinical studies feature prominently in the lifespan perspective which is adopted in this section.

### **3 The Social Functions of Pragmatics**

Pragmatic language skills can be used to perform an array of social functions. These functions are often assumed to be self-evident by writers in pragmatics who typically leave the social dimensions of pragmatic concepts implicit for the reader to



fill in. This assumption is not well founded in many cases, and so this section attempts to orient the reader by laying bare some of the social functions of pragmatic aspects of language. To help structure the discussion, a scale of social functions is adopted. At the bottom of this scale are pragmatic and communicative behaviours which generally go under the banner of phatic communication. These behaviours are lowest ranked, not because they depend on low-level cognitive and language skills—they are actually quite complex pragmatic achievements—but because they involve a form of rapport building with another, which is typically of limited duration, and has little social significance for this reason. Somewhat higher on the scale are pragmatic behaviours which assume a pre-existing social relationship between participants which it is the aim of interaction to maintain. This pre-existing relationship and its maintenance may be the motivation for the use of indirect over direct speech acts, for example. But equally this pre-existing relationship, and the shared knowledge that it entails, may be the basis upon which communicators are able to represent background information within the presuppositions of an utterance, or generate and comprehend implicatures which draw on this information.

At the top of the scale of social functions are any pragmatic aspects of language which go beyond the maintenance of a pre-existing social relationship to involve the further development of that relationship. These aspects, which may include forms of humour and teasing that in any other situation may be perceived as face threatening, are performed with a view to increasing social solidarity between communicators. The use of these pragmatic aspects is only possible because there is already a secure social relationship between the communicators, a relationship which verbal jibes and other communicative behaviours threaten in appearance only. It is important to appreciate that the three levels in this scale of social functions are not intended to constrain the types of pragmatic skills which may be found at each level. Humour may be used in phatic communication, for example, as well as in the development of increasingly robust and enduring levels of social solidarity between communicators. Nor should higher levels in this scale be associated with increasing levels of linguistic politeness, the one aspect of pragmatic language use in which social function has been extensively examined (the reader is referred to Harris (2010) for an overview of politeness in pragmatics). In fact, if anything, pragmatic behaviours during phatic communication may be ‘more polite’ than behaviours higher up the scale of social functions. With these possible misconceptions set aside, we proceed with our discussion.

### ***3.1 Establishing Social Relationships***

Pragmatic language skills are integral to a range of daily interactions in which social relationships are rapidly forged without any expectation on the part of participants that they will be maintained. These interactions can serve a number of purposes. They may break an uncomfortable silence with a work colleague who is standing in a queue in the café, introduce some levity among passengers who are waiting on the arrival of a bus or serve as a distraction from health concerns for patients who

are sitting in a doctor's surgery. In all these scenarios, there may be rapid engagement with, and disengagement from, another person, who is often unknown to the speaker. There is certainly no belief on the part of either participant to the exchange that a meaningful and lasting social relationship is in the process of negotiation. The type of interaction, which occurs in these scenarios, has typically been studied in pragmatics under the term 'phatic communication'. Žegarac (2010) remarks that:

In this type of communication—in which the meanings of the words used are almost irrelevant—linguistic expressions fulfil a social function. They establish an atmosphere of sociability and personal communion between people (a sense of being in positive rapport with each other) through overcoming silence, which is inherently unpleasant and somewhat threatening. (p. 316)

Certain linguistic utterances feature routinely during conversational exchanges which are aimed at phatic communication. These utterances involve speech acts such as greetings which also make an enquiry about the respondent's well-being. This is typically followed by a similar enquiry of the speaker on the part of the respondent. A third utterance usually completes the exchange by expressing general satisfaction with one's state of being. The following exchange is typical of phatic communication:

A: Good morning. Are you well?

B: Not bad, thanks. And how are you?

A: Quite busy, but generally fine.

Of course, speaker A may decide to use his second turn to mention a recent episode of illness in his life. However, in so doing, A is moving the exchange beyond phatic communication, as B is then obliged to make additional enquiries of A. It is with the aim of avoiding a protracted interaction that the third turn in exchanges of this type is generally a neutral statement which does not invite further questioning. Although this is a standard phatic exchange between communicators, it is by no means exhaustive of the types of conversational sequences which serve a phatic function. For example, the following exchange between customers, who are waiting to be served in a coffee shop, is also an example of phatic communication:

A: It is taking forever to be served.

B: You would think they are going to Brazil for the beans.

On this occasion, a quite different set of pragmatic devices is on display. A's utterance is a comment (a type of speech act) which invites a contribution from B. B's utterance is a humorous response to that comment which accounts for the time it is taking to be served in terms of a ridiculous scenario—staff members are travelling to Brazil to collect the coffee beans. Of course, these pragmatic devices are in addition to three other pragmatic processes which A must undertake in order to understand B's utterance: (1) specification of the referent of the pronoun 'they', (2) pragmatic enrichment of 'the beans' to mean the beans *to make this coffee from* and (3) lexical narrowing of the noun phrase 'the beans' to mean *coffee beans* and not *baked beans* or *haricots verts*. What emerges from these examples is that considerable pragmatic sophistication is needed in order to manage the conversational

exchanges which are the basis of phatic communication. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that in the presence of pragmatic disorders, phatic communication and the rapport building, which it makes possible, should be so seriously compromised.

### 3.2 *Maintaining Social Relationships*

The rapid and fleeting rapport building that is the essence of phatic communication is in stark contrast to those conversational interactions in which the aim is to maintain a pre-existing social relationship. (Of course, even phatic communication may be used to break an uneasy silence for communicators between whom there is a strong and enduring social relationship.) Where a social relationship already exists between a speaker and a hearer, two significant points follow from this fact. Firstly, it can be reasonably assumed that a socially related speaker and hearer have knowledge of the interests, preferences and beliefs of the other party—these communicators are not, after all, in the position of two strangers who are engaging in ‘small talk’ while waiting for a bus to arrive. This knowledge can assume increasingly reflexive levels in which, for example, a speaker not only knows that a hearer has two children but also knows that the hearer knows that the speaker knows that the hearer has two children. Secondly, where a social relationship already holds between a speaker and a hearer, for the most part, both parties will want to maintain that relationship and will wish to avoid behaviours which may jeopardize the relationship. This can only be successfully achieved if both participants monitor their own and the other person’s behaviour, have mutual knowledge of the behaviours that would represent a violation of the relationship and have sufficient interest in the ‘health’ of the relationship that they are prepared to expend cognitive effort in these maintenance activities.

These points have important implications for the type of communication that develops between a socially related speaker and hearer (and, a fortiori, for the type of pragmatic devices which are used as part of that communication). Communication between a socially related speaker and hearer is noteworthy on account of its linguistic economy and efficiency. Where knowledge is shared between a speaker and a hearer during communication, there is an overriding tendency for any information which is related to it to remain implicit in an exchange. This avoids speakers and hearers incurring additional cognitive costs through the increased encoding and decoding of language which a more explicit form of communication would necessitate. There are a number of pragmatic devices which speakers may employ to represent implicit information. Chief among them is pragmatic presupposition. In the following exchange, a pre-existing social relationship between A and B enables A to couch knowledge he shares with B within two presuppositions of his utterance:

A: The house on the hill is up for sale again.

B: I hope they get a good price for it this time.

The definite description ‘the house on the hill’ presupposes that there *is* a house on the hill, while the iterative expression ‘again’ presupposes that the house has

been on sale *before*. This information can only be represented as presuppositions of A's utterance because A knows that B knows that there is a house on the hill which has been on sale before. However, a second pragmatic device—the contextual specification of the referent of the pronoun 'they'—is also only possible because A and B share knowledge of who the house's owners are. This shared knowledge simply cannot be assumed in the case where A and B have no pre-existing social relationship. The linguistic economy that these pragmatic devices afford is clearly evident when we compare the above exchange to the much lengthier sequence which is necessary when there is no pre-existing social relationship between two conversational participants:

A: There is a house on the hill. It was up for sale in January and August. And it is up for sale again.

B: The Watsons live in that house. I hope they get a good price for it this time.

Other pragmatic devices are employed by speakers with a view to avoiding any threat to a pre-existing social relationship. Among these devices are included implicatures and speech acts. Consider the exchange between A and B below:

A: Do you fancy a meal at my place tonight?

B: John's parents are coming over after work.

In this exchange, A has extended an invitation to B to join him for dinner. This speech act can be followed by an acceptance of the invitation (the response A prefers) or by a rejection of the invitation (the response A wants to avoid). Clearly, B is implicating by way of her utterance that she will not be able to join A for a meal after work. This response could pose a threat to the social relationship which exists between A and B. But B's use of certain pragmatic devices ensures that this will not be the case. She has expressed her rejection of A's invitation indirectly by way of an implicature—the latter presenting an account of why the invitation is declined—rather than through the use of a direct speech act such as 'I don't want a meal at your place'. Clearly, a direct speech act conveys in no uncertain terms B's decision on the matter. But it does so at the cost of threatening a pre-existing social relationship between A and B which, it may be assumed, both parties will wish to protect.

### ***3.3 Expanding Social Relationships***

Quite often, linguistic exchanges between speakers and hearers are undertaken with the aim of moving beyond the maintenance of a social relationship to the expansion and development of a relationship. This developmental process finds speakers and hearers actively engaged in a form of rapport building which leads to increasingly robust and enduring levels of social solidarity between conversational participants. This should be contrasted with the rapidly forged and transient form of rapport building which is characteristic of phatic communication. The key feature of this developmental process is that it is only successful in cases where there is already a strong social bond between speakers and hearers. This is because the communica-

tive and pragmatic strategies which are used to develop and expand social relationships often involve face-threatening acts. These strategies can range from more or less playful forms of teasing to the use of humour directed against an individual (see Attardo (2010) for an overview of humour research in pragmatics). This is evident in the following exchanges between A and B, where B is directing potentially threatening verbal jibes at A. These exchanges are only possible in the case where B believes he has a reasonably secure social relationship to A, or at least a relationship which can withstand B's apparent attempts to undermine it:

A: I look so old and tired these days when I stand in front of the mirror.

B: Only half of that is true.

A: I wish I could get more time at the gym.

B: I'm sure your waistline wishes it as well.

In the first of these exchanges, B may be taken to implicate that he believes speaker A looks either old or tired. But it is clear in this exchange that B's intention to communicate this belief is performed solely with a view to achieving some humorous effect. Similarly, in the second exchange, B may not even seriously hold the belief that A is overweight. Nevertheless, B's utterance in this exchange can only function as verbal humour to the extent that B appears to be entertaining this belief. In both cases, there is no serious threat from B's remarks to the social relationship between A and B—the very fact that A feels sufficiently comfortable to talk about aspects of her physical appearance to B reveals that she believes she has a secure social relationship to B. Instead, the aim of these sequences is to consolidate the relationship between these individuals and to develop it in a direction where even the most personal aspects of one's self-image can be held up for ridicule without any serious risk of adverse social consequences.

#### **4 The Impact of Pragmatic Disorders on Social Functioning**

So it can be seen that pragmatic language skills serve a number of important social functions for communicators. Given that this is the case, the question for this section is how impairment of those skills is likely to compromise a person's social functioning. It was briefly described in Sect. 1, how an individual's social functioning is shaped to a very large extent by the life stages he or she passes through from infancy to advanced adulthood. In this way, the social environment of and demands on a 5-year-old child differ significantly from those of the 50-year-old businessman who works in sales. In the former scenario, independent friendship networks are often being established for the first time by means of the negotiation of social relationships between the child and his or her school peers. In the latter scenario, the businessman must negotiate complex social relationships with clients and colleagues and must tailor his communicative activities to the specific features of these work-based relationships. This is not to overlook, of course, a vast range of other

social relationships which are unrelated to this individual's professional duties but which are no less socially demanding (e.g. the role of a parent or of a community organiser). Given the significant variation across life stages in one's social functioning, it simply makes no sense to attempt to characterize this functioning, or indeed the ways in which pragmatic disorders impact adversely upon it, apart from these stages. For this reason, the current section adopts a lifespan perspective in its examination of the contribution of pragmatic disorders to the social functioning of an individual. The three stages which are examined as part of that perspective are infancy, childhood and adulthood.

## **4.1 *Infancy: 0–2 Years***

An infant is born into a world of complex social relationships. These relationships shape the earliest experiences of the neonate. They are also the basis upon which an infant secures his place within a social group of other people which will be integral to his own survival. From the provision of food and warmth to protection from harm, an infant must establish early the rudiments of social interaction if he is to thrive and develop. Of course, more often than not, he enters the world well equipped for the type of social orientation that his survival demands. He is born with physical reflexes which help him locate a source of food (e.g. rooting reflex), with sensory organs which allow him to attend to sights, sounds and smells in his environment, and with a phonatory mechanism which enables him to signal to others his basic needs and any discomfort. However, alongside these physical capabilities, a set of other abilities of fundamental importance to social interaction and communication is in rapid development during infancy. These abilities include smiling and laughter, gaze and pointing gestures and vocalization and babbling. In this section, we examine these behaviours and consider how they may be compromised in a range of clinical disorders. We also assess what implications impairment of these behaviours may have for an infant's capacity to forge social relationships and engage in communication.

### **4.1.1 Smiling and Laughter**

Smiling and laughter have been extensively examined during infancy. Smiling, in particular, is a complex phenomenon, with different types of smiles taken to play different roles within the infant's developing social repertoire. Spontaneous smiles—smiling which occurs in the absence of recognized external or internal stimuli—is widely believed to begin from the time of birth<sup>1</sup> until around 2 months of age, when they are replaced by social smiles (but see Kawakami et al. (2009) who present evidence that spontaneous smiles may still be present at over 15 months).

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<sup>1</sup> Kawakami et al. (2008) have also reported spontaneous smiles in preterm neonates, the youngest of which was 200 days from conception at the point of observation.

While spontaneous smiles are widely believed to be the origin of social smiles, Kawakami et al. state that there are no data on the functions of spontaneous smiles, and that these smiles may have some functions in developing infants' facial expressions (e.g. strengthening the zygomaticus major muscle). Between 6 and 10 weeks of age, babies begin to exhibit social smiling. This occurs most often in the context of interactions with caregivers who are pleased at the infants' positive reaction and respond by smiling back at them (Shaffer 2009). Although social smiling is a universal phenomenon among infants with normal neurodevelopment, investigators have found significant cultural differences in this early social behaviour. Wörmann et al. (2012) investigated social smiling in two sociocultural communities—German families in Münster and Nso families in Cameroon. Although social smiling occurred for similar amounts of time in both communities when infants were 6 weeks old, German mothers and their infants engaged in social smiling more often than Nso mothers and their infants at 12 weeks of age. Social smiling represents the emergence of true social reciprocity between an infant and those around him, and is the infant's first exposure to the type of dyadic exchange structure which is the basis of communication.

Later developments in smiling involve the use of joint attention, in which an infant is jointly attending to an object and a social partner. In anticipatory smiling, an infant looks at an object, smiles and then turns to look at a partner already smiling. The smile *anticipates* the social contact with the partner. In reactive smiling, an infant looks at an object, then turns to look at a partner and only then smiles. In this case, the smile is a *reaction* to the social partner. Anticipatory smiling has been found to increase between 8 and 10 months, and suggests a developing ability on the part of an infant to communicate positive affect about an object (Venezia et al. 2004). Anticipatory smiling has also been found to predict later social achievements in infants. Parlade et al. (2009) reported a positive correlation between anticipatory smiling at 8 and 10 months and parent-rated social expressivity scores at 30 months, and anticipatory smiling at 9 months and parent-rated social competence scores at 30 months. Infants can also vary their type of smile in relation to context. Fogel et al. (2006) examined infant smiles at 6 and 12 months during mother–infant games (peekaboo and tickle), which were normally occurring, or perturbed games. The duration and amplitude of smile expressions, the latter measured by extent of lip corner retraction, varied as a function of the type of game played, perturbation and during set-up versus climax of the game.<sup>2</sup> Laughter may sometimes accompany infant smiling. Kawakami et al. (2007) recorded 565 spontaneous smiles and only 15 spontaneous laughs (smiles accompanied by vocal sounds) in a male infant who was observed from birth to the end of the 6th month. Spontaneous laughs have been found to accompany bilateral (rather than unilateral) smiles (i.e. smiles engaging both sides of the mouth; Kawakami et al. 2006).

Smiling and laughter are clearly significant achievements in an infant's social development. However, they are also important precursors to the development of

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<sup>2</sup> Lin and Green (2009) found that infants in the second half of the first year varied smiling and vocalization in accordance with maternal behaviour and the familiarity of their social partners.

communication skills in general and pragmatic language skills in particular. We have already seen how smiling varies with features of context (e.g. familiarity of social partners), and provides infants with early practice in the turn-taking structure that is the essence of conversational exchanges. Anticipatory smiling has a decidedly communicative purpose. The infant who looks at an object and turns, already smiling, to an adult is engaging in a form of referential communication. For that infant is effectively communicating to his social partner a thought along the lines of 'that object I've just looked at has given me pleasure'. Messinger (2009, p. 416) states that between 6 and 12 months, 'infants begin to smile at others with reference to particular objects or events in what is known as triadic communication'. Notwithstanding the close relationship between social development and communicative achievements, it is important not to assume that increased smiling and laughter lead to better social and communication outcomes. Similarly, one cannot take it for granted that a developmental delay in smiling and laughter will always lead to social and communication problems. For example, there is evidence that in normally developing infants, low levels of smiling and laughter may actually lead to greater parental engagement with such infants, the effect of which is increased attachment security (Mireault et al. 2012). But on the relatively safe assumption that smiling and laughter are among the behaviours that are likely to be developmental precursors of communication, this section concludes by examining some of the disorders in which these early social behaviours are compromised.

Although smiling and laughter have been extensively examined in normally developing infants, these same early social behaviours have been less commonly investigated in infants with neurodevelopmental disorders and other clinical conditions. Two clinical populations in which these social behaviours have been investigated are children with genetic syndromes and children with ASD. As examples of the former population, we will examine what is known about smiling and laughter in infants and children with Down's syndrome and Angelman syndrome. Communication and language are significantly compromised in children with these genetic disorders. To the extent that smiling and laughter are social precursors to the emergence of language and communication skills, we may also expect to find some disruption to these children's early social behaviours. Certainly, the available empirical literature in this area suggests that this is indeed the case. In an early longitudinal study of laughter in infants with Down's syndrome, Cicchetti and Sroufe (1976) found that these infants laughed to groups of stimulus items in the same order as normally developing infants. Specifically, they laughed first at physically intrusive items and later to items which required greater cognitive sophistication. However, the development of laughter was delayed by several months in the infants with Down's syndrome. Moreover, the cognitive developmental status of these infants paralleled their affective development.

Smiling is also delayed in infants with Down's syndrome. Berger and Cunningham (1986) found evidence of significantly delayed emergence of social smiling and less frequent smiling in a longitudinal study of infants with Down's syndrome during the first 6 months of their lives. The smiles of these infants were found to be shorter and less discriminative between a mobile and an immobile face condition



during interactions with their mothers than in normally developing infants. Carvajal and Iglesias (1997) examined social smiling in infants with Down's syndrome between 3.2 and 13.6 months of age. Although infants with and without Down's syndrome smiled longer during a condition involving spontaneous face-to-face interaction than in a still-face condition, the difference was only significant in typically developing children. Typically developing children also smiled for a longer period than infants with Down's syndrome during the spontaneous interaction condition. In a later study, Carvajal and Iglesias (2001) examined Duchenne and non-Duchenne smiles in infants with and without Down's syndrome, while they looked at their mothers' faces or at objects. (A Duchenne smile involves bilateral raising of the lip corners and raising of the cheeks and is associated with a discrete positive emotional state.) Unlike typically developing infants, who displayed similar frequencies of Duchenne and non-Duchenne smiles when looking at toys but a higher frequency of Duchenne smiles when looking at their mothers, infants with Down's syndrome used the Duchenne smile with open mouth most frequently regardless of whether they were looking at their mothers or at toys. In explanation of this difference, Carvajal and Iglesias point to the greater cortical control of facial expressions by typically developing children and difficulties in modulation of muscular tone in infants with Down's syndrome.

Angelman syndrome is a neurogenetic disorder which is caused in most cases by maternal deletion of chromosome 15q11–q13. The syndrome's main clinical features include severe intellectual disability, epileptic seizures and electroencephalogram (EEG) abnormalities, neurological problems and distinct facial dysmorphic features (Van Buggenhout and Fryns 2009). Severe language impairment is the norm, and there is absent speech in the majority of cases (Dagli et al. 2011). Individuals with this syndrome are frequently observed to display smiling and laughing behaviours which are excessive, inappropriate and dissociated from contextual events. This happy demeanour earned these children the name 'puppet children' in Angelman's original characterization of the syndrome (Angelman 1965). It was slightly later when Bower and Jeavons (1967) coined the expression 'happy puppet syndrome' as a more apt description of the presentation of these children. More recently, investigations have brought into doubt the standard phenotypic characterization of the syndrome. Oliver et al. (2002) examined the smiling and laughing behaviour of three individuals with Angelman syndrome across typical social contexts. These investigators found that smiling and laughter increased during social situations and occurred at low levels during nonsocial situations. Horsler and Oliver (2006) examined the smiling and laughter behaviour of seven boys and four girls with Angelman syndrome who were aged between 4 and 11 years. These children were observed as they were exposed to three conditions in which the parameters of social interaction were varied. The laughing and smiling behaviour of these children increased significantly in a condition that involved adult speech, touch, smiling, laughing and eye contact. These studies provide support for the view that these social behaviours are not as context inappropriate as earlier clinical characterizations of the syndrome have suggested.

Early social behaviours, such as smiling and laughter, are markedly impaired in infants with ASD. This impairment contributes to the significant socialisation difficulties that are a feature of all individuals with ASD, and is also a factor in the development of aberrant communication skills by children and adults with this neurodevelopmental disorder. Social smiling is one of the behavioural markers which, by 12 months of age, distinguish siblings who will be later diagnosed with autism from other siblings and from low-risk controls (Zwaigenbaum et al. 2005). Deficits in smiling and laughter extend well beyond infancy into childhood and adulthood. Autistic children aged 30–70 months have been found to be much less likely than normal children to combine their smiles with eye contact in an act conveying communicative intent, and to smile in response to their mothers' smiles (Dawson et al. 1990). Reddy et al. (2002) found that laughter was rare in pre-school children with autism in response to events such as funny faces or socially inappropriate acts, but was common in inexplicable or strange situations. Compared to pre-school children with Down's syndrome, these children also displayed higher frequencies of unshared laughter in interactive situations and lower frequencies of smiles in response to others' laughter. Blampied et al. (2010) found that male children with ASD aged 5–15 years cannot reliably differentiate between the enjoyment and non-enjoyment smiles of others. Boraston et al. (2008) used the reduced tendency of individuals with autism to look at the eyes of faces to explain the impaired ability of autistic adults in their study to discriminate genuine from posed smiles.

#### 4.1.2 Gaze and Pointing Gesture

Gaze and pointing are not as dissimilar as they may at first appear. This is because infants can, and frequently do, use eye gaze to point to objects in their environment in exactly the same way that they may use their index finger to point to objects. Also, gaze and indexical pointing are developmentally related in infants. It has been found that infants' ability to point with the index finger is predicted by their prior ability to follow the gaze direction of an adult (Matthews et al. 2012). The emergence of gaze following in infants occurs in the first year. Infants begin to follow an adult's direction of gaze between 6 and 12 months of age. Referential gaze following is a later developmental achievement, emerging sometime between 12 and 18 months (Jao et al. 2010). In referential gaze following, an infant sees an adult directing her attention towards a referent through the orientation of her eyes and head, and then shifts his own attention in the direction of the referent. There is considerable evidence to support the presence of robust referential gaze following, particularly to visually occluded targets, in infants aged 18–24 months (Jao et al. 2010). The reason infants follow the referential gaze of adults to objects is because they view them as intentional agents who entertain mental states about those objects. Referential gaze following is thus an early expression of a cognitive capacity in infants that will eventually lead to full mental state attribution. This cognitive capacity lies at the heart of all pragmatic interpretation (see Cummings (2013, 2014b) for discussion). It is unsurprising, therefore, to discover that referential gaze following has

been linked to later language and communicative developments in infants. Brooks and Meltzoff (2008) examined referential gaze following in infants aged 10 and 11 months, and found that infants who gaze followed and looked longer at a target object had significantly faster vocabulary growth through 2 years of age than infants who engaged in shorter looks.<sup>3</sup>

Depending on one's theoretical viewpoint, the age of emergence of the pointing gesture ranges from 8 to 15 months (Liszkowski and Tomasello 2011). Pointing gestures in infants can take different forms and serve different communicative functions. In terms of morphological aspects, pointing gestures can involve the use of the whole hand or the index finger. Index-finger pointing is more common in infants than whole-hand pointing and is more frequently accompanied by vocalizations (Cochet and Vauclair 2010; Liszkowski and Tomasello 2011). It is also correlated more strongly with the comprehension of pointing (Liszkowski and Tomasello 2011). In terms of the communicative functions of these different forms, Cochet and Vauclair (2010) found that whole-hand pointing was an imperative gesture in toddlers aged 15–30 months, while index-finger pointing was a declarative gesture. Alternatively, Begus and Southgate (2012) argued that infant pointing has an interrogative function, as indicated by the fact that the 16-month-old infants in their study modified their pointing behaviour in accordance with the perceived ability of the experimenter—an experimenter who was perceived to be knowledgeable (i.e. able to provide information) elicited more pointing behaviour from infants to novel objects than an experimenter who was perceived to be ignorant. Liszkowski and Tomasello (2011) have argued that index-finger pointing first embodies infants' understanding of communicative intentions. In view of this, one might expect to find a relationship between infant pointing and later language and communicative achievements. This is indeed the case. Brooks and Meltzoff (2008) found that infant pointing strengthened the relationship between gaze following and productive vocabulary through 2 years of age in the infants in their study.

There is now a substantial literature on impairments of gaze and pointing gestures in infants with clinical conditions in which there are marked communication impairments. Neurodevelopmental disorders, such as genetic syndromes and ASD, are cases in point. Roberts et al. (2012) examined gaze direction in infants with fragile X syndrome (FXS) at 9, 12 and 18 months of age. These infants displayed prolonged look durations compared to 12-month-old, typically developing infants. Moreover, look duration was found to correlate with the severity of autistic behaviour in the infants with FXS. Wolff et al. (2012) reported problems in gaze integration in 3–5-year-old boys with idiopathic autism and boys with autism in FXS. The impairment of the latter group of boys was less severe than that of the idiopathic autism group. Infants with Down's syndrome have been found to gaze at their mothers longer during face-to-face play than non-delayed infants (Crown et al. 1992). Thurman and Mervis (2013) found that children with Down's syndrome, who were aged 42–71 months, were more likely to follow another person's gaze in triadic situ-

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<sup>3</sup> The reader is referred to Chap. 3 in Bloom (2000) for an excellent discussion of the role of theory of mind in word learning in children.

ations than same-aged children with Williams syndrome. Gaze anomalies have also been reported in Prader–Willi syndrome, the latter confirmed through electrophysiological measurements (Halit et al. 2008).

Pointing gestures are also atypical and late to emerge in infants with neurodevelopmental disorders. Klein-Tasman et al. (2007) reported difficulties with pointing, along with other behaviours, in more than half of the child participants with Williams syndrome examined in their study. Paparella et al. (2011) found that autistic children were delayed in their use of pointing to make requests compared to typically developing children. Whereas typically developing children with an expressive language age under 20 months used pointing to make requests in this study, autistic children first used pointing for this purpose when their expressive language age was over 20 months. All of the typically developing children used pointing to make requests, while only 58% of the autistic children did so. Across language levels, 100% of typically developing children were able to follow the points of another person. The percentage of autistic children who followed points at each language level was 89%. It is worth remarking that there are also some notable pointing achievements in children with neurodevelopmental disorders. John and Mervis (2010) found that pre-schoolers with Williams syndrome and Down's syndrome were able to use pointing gestures to infer communicative intent during a hiding game. Children with ASD have been shown to make use of pointing by a speaker to facilitate referential word learning (Akechi et al. 2013).

#### 4.1.3 Vocalizations and Babbling

Vocalizations and babbling during infancy have significant implications for social and communicative development. Research indicates that infants' early vocalizations can be more or less speech-like, can vary according to context and can be used to modulate maternal responses. Gros-Louis et al. (2006) reported that ten infants with a mean age of 8 months and 27 days produced an average of  $34.1 \pm 5.4$  vowel-like sounds and  $12.8 \pm 3.0$  consonant-vowel sounds during unstructured play sessions with their mothers. Mothers displayed differential responding to these infants' vocalizations in accordance with their perceived quality. They responded with imitations to the more speech-like consonant-vowel vocalizations produced by the infants, and used play vocalizations in response to these infants' vowel-like sounds. Mothers appeared to regulate their contingent feedback in accordance with the speech-like quality of their infants' vocalizations—a behaviour which may be taken to provide relevant stimulation for communicative development. Hsu et al. (2014) found evidence that infants varied their vocalizations in two game contexts. Mothers were studied as they played tickle and peekaboo games with their 6- and 12-month-old infants. The peekaboo game elicited more mature canonical syllables, while there were more primitive quasi-resonant nuclei<sup>4</sup> during the tickle game. Also, vocalizations increased in both infant age groups from the set-up to the climax

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<sup>4</sup> Quasi-resonant nuclei are vowel-like sounds with normal phonation but with limited resonance.

in the peekaboo game, but not in the tickle game. That infant vocalizations have a social regulatory function is demonstrated by their capacity to modulate maternal responses. Hsu and Fogel (2003) found that the occurrence of infant non-distress vocalizations was synchronized with maternal facial expression and touch in infants who were observed weekly in interactions with their mothers between 4 and 24 weeks.

Babbling is a significant precursor to the emergence of language skills in infants. The canonical stage of babbling, in which infants produce well-formed syllables often as part of reduplicated sequences (e.g. 'dadada'), is a particularly sensitive indicator of later language skills. Normally developing infants begin to produce canonical babbling at around 10 months of age. Studies have shown that when canonical babbling is delayed or exhibits deviant features, there is an adverse effect on the development of language skills. Oller et al. (1999) examined canonical babbling in over 3400 infants who were around 10 months of age. Infants who experienced delayed canonical babbling had smaller production vocabularies at 18, 24 and 30 months than infants with normal canonical babbling. Rvachew et al. (1999) also reported a relationship between canonical babbling ability and expressive vocabulary size at 18 months of age in infants who had a consistently lower rate of canonical syllable production attributable to early onset of otitis media. Fasolo et al. (2008) found that the syllable structure and phonetic characteristics of babbling distinguished children who had delayed expressive language development ('late talkers') from typically developing peers. Specifically, the babbling of late talkers displayed reduced phonetic complexity and a lower number of consonantal types than did the babbling of typically developing peers.

Vocalizations and babbling are often abnormal or diminished in neurodevelopmental disorders such as ASD. Plumb and Wetherby (2013) reported that infants aged between 18 and 24 months of age with ASD used a significantly lower proportion of vocalizations with speech sounds and a significantly higher proportion of atypical vocalizations than typically developing children. Communicative vocalizations late in the second year were found to uniquely predict expressive language outcome at age 3 in these children. Sheinkopf et al. (2000) found that autistic children did not have difficulty with the expression of well-formed syllables in canonical babbling, but rather produced a greater proportion of syllables with atypical phonation than comparison children with developmental delays. Atypical vocalizations were also a feature of the 18–36-month-old toddlers with ASD who were studied by Schoen et al. (2011). Vocalizations and babbling are also aberrant in infants with neurogenetic syndromes. Lynch et al. (1995) reported that infants with Down's syndrome began canonical babbling in the first year of life but two months later than typically developing infants. Canonical babbling was also less stable in the infants with Down's syndrome. Age of onset of canonical babbling was found to be correlated with the social and communicative functioning of these infants at 27 months of age. Sohner and Mitchell (1991) found a marked delay in major acquisitions in babbling in a child with cri du chat syndrome who was studied between 8 and 26 months of age. By 26 months of age, this child had still not acquired the first spoken word.

## 4.2 *Childhood: 2–17 Years*

It can be seen that infancy is characterized by the rapid development of a wide array of social behaviours. The infant's need to ensure his own survival by securing food, warmth and protection is the driver of these early social achievements. However, already in infancy, these social accomplishments are making possible a set of communicative behaviours, the purpose of which will be to address the increasingly complex social demands of childhood. These demands include the establishment of peer relations of the type that will sustain the child's cognitive, linguistic and emotional development. The infant who is delayed in acquiring early social behaviours, such as smiling and pointing, and who has concomitant communication delay/disorder, is embarking on childhood in a compromised state. Such a child will be poorly equipped to address the more complex social demands of this developmental period. Every social interaction will pose difficult and, in some cases, insurmountable challenges for the child with communication delay/disorder. This section asks what role pragmatic failures play in these early social difficulties of children. Children with neurodevelopmental disorders are among several clinical populations examined. The findings of studies are advanced to support claims of a specific role for pragmatic disorders in the social functioning deficits of these children.

The complex interplay between impairments of social behaviours (e.g. eye gaze) and communication in infants with neurodevelopmental disorders manifests itself even more clearly during childhood. Children with ASD and children with neurogenetic syndromes have impaired appreciation of the social functions of pragmatic behaviours as well as more general impairments of social functioning. Pexman et al. (2011) found that 18 children with high-functioning ASD exhibited less accurate appreciation of the social functions of irony than typically developing children. This finding was explained in terms of group differences in the processing of eye gaze, among other behaviours. Philofsky et al. (2007) found impaired pragmatic language and social functioning in school-age children with ASD and Williams syndrome. However, children with Williams syndrome displayed significantly better performance on the social relations subscale of the Children's Communication Checklist (CCC; Bishop 2003) than the children with ASD. Laws and Bishop (2004) found significant levels of pragmatic language impairment and difficulties with social relationships in 19 children and young adults with Williams syndrome. Volden et al. (2009) obtained equivocal results regarding pragmatic and social functioning in a study of 37 high-functioning children with ASD. These investigators found that pragmatic language scores accounted for variance in socialization performance on one measure of ability, but did not uniquely predict level of social adaptive functioning on a second measure.

The population of children with specific language impairment (SLI) has also been found to have social difficulties, with impairments of pragmatics contributing to those difficulties. St Clair et al. (2011) conducted a longitudinal study of children with SLI between 7 and 16 years of age. An increase in social problems was found to occur between these ages. Pragmatic abilities were related to the social difficulties

of these children. Conti-Ramsden and Botting (2004) examined 242 children with SLI between the ages of 7 and 11 years of age. These children typically displayed poor social competence, with 36% of the cohort at risk of being regular targets for victimization (this compared to just 12% of typically developing peers). Pragmatic language difficulties, as measured on the CCC (Bishop 1998), were most strongly related of any measure to the poor social outcome of these children and to expressive language related to victimization (see also Botting and Conti-Ramsden 1999). Marton et al. (2005) reported low social self-esteem and pragmatic impairments in children with SLI who were aged from 7 to 10 years. Adults with a childhood history of pragmatic language impairment—a subtype of SLI in which there are marked pragmatic deficits—have been found to have problems establishing social relationships at a follow-up assessment conducted at 22 years of age (Whitehouse et al. 2009).

Social functioning is frequently compromised in children who sustain a TBI. Yeates et al. (2004) examined short- and long-term social outcomes in 109 children with TBI between 6 and 12 years of age. Long-term social outcomes were accounted for by pragmatic language skills, among other neurocognitive skills. Johnson et al. (2006) examined long-term outcomes of acquired brain injury in 656 children. Communication impairments, as identified on the CCC-2 (Bishop 2003), were found in 59% of this sample. The Comprehensive Assessment of Spoken Language (CASL; Carrow-Woolfolk 1999) identified 27% of the sample as having pragmatic impairments. Scores on both the CCC-2 and CASL correlated positively with a functional outcome measure, which included an assessment of the social consequences of behaviour. Other, less well-documented clinical disorders in which investigators have found evidence of pragmatic language impairments and social functioning deficits include reactive attachment disorder (Sadiq et al. 2012) and social phobia (Scharfstein et al. 2011). Finally, pragmatic language skills have also been found to mediate the relationship between a range of behaviours and social skills problems. In this way, Leonard et al. (2011) found that pragmatic language use fully mediated the relation between hyperactivity and social skills problems and partially mediated the relation between inattention and social skills problems in a community sample of 54 children aged 9–11 years.

### ***4.3 Adulthood: 18 Years and Onwards***

A large range of illnesses and injuries can disrupt pragmatic language skills during adulthood. The onset of a right- or left-sided cerebrovascular accident ('stroke') can devastate language skills, including pragmatic language skills. The impact of such an event on an individual's social functioning across a range of domains can be severe, and includes loss of friendships and other social networks. Like children, adults can sustain a TBI. TBI has been shown to have adverse implications for the social reintegration of clients in the months and years following injury, with pragmatic deficits making a significant contribution to these clients' social difficulties. Dementias of various types can disrupt pragmatic language skills and, along with

them, a range of social interactions which depend on those skills. Neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis are increasingly being found to compromise language and pragmatic skills. In at least one of these conditions—Parkinson's disease—pragmatic language impairments have been well researched, although the contribution of these impairments to social functioning in clients with this disorder is unclear. Finally, mental illnesses such as schizophrenia often exhibit marked pragmatic impairments. It is extensively documented that social functioning is compromised in clients with schizophrenia. We will examine the results of studies which indicate that pragmatic impairments contribute to the social functioning deficits of these clients.

Left- and right-hemisphere damage is often, but not always, caused by a cerebrovascular accident. The language and pragmatic deficits that can result from this damage vary considerably (see Chap. 3 in Cummings (2009) and Chap. 2 in Cummings (2014a) for discussion of these deficits). Left-hemisphere damage is typically associated with aphasia. Aphasia has been reported to be the most important predictor of social outcome in stroke patients (Gialanella et al. 2011), and has been found to negatively affect long-term social participation in these clients (Dalemans et al. 2010). The contribution of specific aspects of pragmatics to the impaired social functioning of clients with aphasia is demonstrated in a study by Davidson et al. (2008). These investigators identified reduced friendships and social networks in 15 older adults with aphasia, with the role of humour identified as particularly significant in case study data. The more pronounced pragmatic deficits that attend right-hemisphere damage also have a substantial impact on social functioning (Tompkins 2012). Add to this the finding that the right cerebral hemisphere is more active than the left hemisphere in processing social interactions (Semrud-Clikeman et al. 2011), and there is considerable potential for social compromise in pragmatically impaired clients with right-hemisphere damage. This is confirmed by the findings of studies. Fournier et al. (2008) found evidence of pragmatic impairments, involving the interpretation of lies and sarcasm, and deficits in complex social functioning in a patient who underwent right hemispherectomy 30 years earlier for the treatment of intractable epilepsy.

Adults who sustain a TBI can experience a large spectrum of social disability. Impairments of pragmatics and discourse have been found to contribute to the social deficits of these clients. Galski et al. (1998) examined social integration and conversational, narrative and procedural discourse in 30 patients with TBI in an outpatient brain injury programme. Five discourse variables predicted 64.5% of the variance in social integration as measured on the Community Integration Questionnaire (Willer et al. 1993, 1994). These variables included greater wordiness and more topics in narrative and procedural tasks. Additional psychosocial variables, such as age, gender, education, quality of life, depression and dementia rating, did not add to the variance in social integration achieved by discourse variables. Snow et al. (1998) examined conversational discourse abilities in 26 speakers (mean age 26.2 years) who had sustained a severe TBI. Conversational samples were assessed using the modified version of Damico's clinical discourse analysis (CDA-M; Damico 1985, 1991), an assessment tool which consists of 17 parameters organized



according to Gricean maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner. Psychosocial handicap was assessed using the Craig Handicap Assessment and Reporting Technique (CHART; Whiteneck et al. 1992a, 1992b). At follow-up, a minimum of 2 years post injury, a significant association was obtained between conversation CDA-M scores in 24 speakers with TBI and the social integration subscale of the CHART.

A range of dementias can adversely impact on an individual's social functioning. These include, most notably, Alzheimer's disease (AD) but also frontotemporal dementia (FTD), vascular dementia and Lewy body dementia. AD often spares social functioning until late in its course (Seeley et al. 2007).<sup>5</sup> One aspect of social functioning that is eventually disrupted in all patients with AD is social interaction. A range of pragmatic and discourse difficulties contribute to the social interaction problems of these patients. These include referential communication disturbances (Carlomagno et al. 2005; Feyereisen et al. 2007), impaired comprehension of indirect requests and conversational implications (Cuerva et al. 2001) and topic management deficits (Mentis et al. 1995). Severe deficits in social functioning are a feature of frontal variant and (right-sided) temporal variant FTD (Edwards-Lee et al. 1997; Kipps et al. 2009a). Pragmatic deficits in the interpretation of sarcasm are believed to contribute to the social interaction problems of patients with behavioural variant FTD (Kipps et al. 2009b). The central feature of dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB) is progressive cognitive decline which is of sufficient magnitude to interfere with normal social and occupational function (Mosimann and McKeith 2003). Significant pragmatic and discourse deficits have been found in patients with DLB (Rousseaux et al. 2010; Ash et al. 2011; 2012). However, the exact contribution of these deficits to the social functioning impairments of these patients has not yet been established.

Social interaction (and, by extension, social functioning) is likely to be adversely affected by pragmatic and discourse deficits in neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's disease. Verbal and non-verbal pragmatic skills are impaired in patients with Parkinson's disease (Hall et al. 2011). McNamara and Durso (2003) found that patients with Parkinson's disease in their study were significantly impaired on measures of pragmatic communication abilities, particularly in the areas of turn-taking, conversational appropriateness, prosodics and proxemics. Social interactional difficulties in Parkinson's disease are related to social cognitive deficits in theory of mind (Roca et al. 2010), which have also been found to co-occur with the pragmatic deficits in this disorder (Monetta et al. 2009). Pragmatic and discourse anomalies have also been reported in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS; or motor neurone disease). Roberts-South et al. (2012) examined discourse skills in 16 individuals with ALS without dementia during a picture description task. Discourse produc-

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<sup>5</sup> This is confirmed in a study by Rankin et al. (2003) of 16 patients with Alzheimer's disease (AD). These patients were within the normal range on all scores on a measure of interpersonal functioning. This pattern was not observed in other patients in the study who had frontal and temporal variant frontotemporal dementia (FTD). Sturm et al. (2011) reported preserved mutual gaze during conversations between 13 patients with AD and their partners. Mutual gaze was diminished in FTD couples and was increased in couples with a semantic dementia patient.

tivity was less impaired than discourse content for subjects with ALS. Moreover, longitudinal changes occurred in discourse production with disease progression. To date, no studies have been undertaken to examine the possible relationship of pragmatic and discourse deficits to social functioning in individuals with neurodegenerative diseases.

It is becoming increasingly clear that pragmatic deficits contribute to the reduced social functioning of clients with schizophrenia. Verbal underproductivity has been found to predict social skills, social engagement and friendships in chronically institutionalized patients with schizophrenia at 2.5-year follow-up (Bowie and Harvey 2008). Schenkel et al. (2005) studied linguistic context processing in 42 inpatients with chronic schizophrenia. These investigators argued that context processing impairments may be a factor in the poor premorbid social functioning of these patients. In their study of 30 outpatients with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder, Sparks et al. (2010) reported significant associations between the comprehension of sarcastic and deceitful exchanges on the TASIT (McDonald et al. 2003) and engagement in recreational activities, as measured on the longitudinal interval follow-up evaluation—range of impaired functioning tool (LIFE–RIFT; Leon et al. 1999). Schizophrenic subjects who experienced difficulty comprehending sarcastic and deceitful exchanges experienced less engagement in, and enjoyment of, recreational activities.

## 5 Summary and Future Research

This chapter has adopted a lifespan perspective to examine the relationship between pragmatic disorders and impairments of social functioning. This perspective has emphasized that social demands on the individual vary with each major life stage, from infancy through childhood and into adulthood. Accordingly, one and the same pragmatic disorder may have very different implications for an individual's social functioning as some social demands become prominent, and others recede into the background (e.g. the social demands of the workplace upon retirement). Pragmatic disorders in a range of clinical populations were examined and, where available, the results of studies were introduced to validate claims of an impact of these disorders on social functioning.

It will not have escaped the reader that social functioning was variously construed in the previous sections. On some occasions, it was characterized in terms of social interaction skills. On other occasions, social functioning was taken to consist in the number of friendships and networks in an individual's life. On still other occasions, social functioning was construed in terms of social self-esteem. This lack of consistency in how social functioning is defined and operationalized in clinical studies was discussed in Sect. 2. It is a major impediment to research on the social impact of pragmatic disorders, as any comparison of findings across studies is necessarily limited by the fact that researchers are describing and measuring quite different behaviours as part of social functioning. A priority for future research must be

a greater consistency (or possibly even a consensus among investigators) as to the core behaviours which may be taken to constitute social functioning.

Another priority for future research on the relationship between pragmatic disorders and social functioning must be the development and consistent use by investigators of robust measures of pragmatic behaviours. Published pragmatic checklists and protocols often assess quite disparate behaviours, not all of which are ‘pragmatic’ in any clear sense (see Chap. 6 in Cummings (2009) for discussion). This lack of consistency in the use of pragmatic measures across studies makes any comparison of their findings all but impossible. Although certain pragmatic assessments have grown to a position of prominence in studies—the CCC (Bishop 2003) is a case in point—it remains the situation today that there is no widely accepted measure of pragmatic language skills in use in clinical research. Until such a measure is forthcoming, there will be little clarity about which pragmatic language skills result in impairments of social functioning when these skills are disrupted in children and adults.

Finally, there has been extensive investigation of pragmatic language skills and social functioning in some clinical populations (e.g. clients with schizophrenia). However, in other clinical populations (e.g. clients with dementias), these same areas have been somewhat overlooked, notwithstanding the presence of significant pragmatic and social impairments in individuals with these conditions. While this difference in research emphasis is explicable to some extent—schizophrenia is a chronic disorder which has greater, lifelong implications for social functioning than progressive conditions like the dementias—it nevertheless remains the case that the neglect of pragmatic and social functioning in certain clinical conditions has adverse implications for how these conditions may be managed by clinicians. An emphasis on the study of pragmatic and social functioning in clinical populations which have been neglected to date will not only generate a much-needed evidence base on those specific disorders but also help clinicians and researchers better understand the complex interplay between the domains of pragmatics and social functioning in general.

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# The Dialogic Principle Revisited: Speech Acts and Mental States

Edda Weigand

**Abstract** This chapter introduces the concept of “language as dialogue” which rests on the insight that language use is always dialogically oriented. A distinction has to be made between initiative and reactive speech acts, which are functionally different speech act types. In this way, the equation of action and illocution can be overcome. The relation between action and reaction is described by the dialogic principle proper as conventional interdependence at the level of interaction. A dialogic speech act taxonomy can be derived from the superordinate purpose of coming to an understanding in dialogue. Speech acts are defined by pragmatic claims to truth and to volition which correspond to the basic mental states of belief and desire. In this way, the issue of connecting cognition and action can be settled.

**Keywords** Dialogue analysis · Speech acts · Societal pragmatics · Mental states · Cognition

## 1 The Dialogic Principle

In science generally and in innovative new branches of science in particular, such as the analysis of dialogue, we are always on the move. Questions indicate the direction; tentative answers are not so much destinations as turning points which after a short time lead us to revise our route. Without productive criticism, not least of ourselves, progress in science is not possible. The long sought-after route to the

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solution of a problem unexpectedly opens up and proves to be obvious. Gaps in our knowledge can be closed and connections can be made between areas which belong together, but whose relatedness we had up till now not been able to demonstrate. Thus, a conceptual web gradually spreads out which forms the basis for a new branch of science.

The relatively new area of dialogue analysis meanwhile rests on such a conceptual web. The central element in this web is what we could call the dialogic principle. The singular emphasis of a principle and its introduction with the definite article, indicating that it is known and generally valid, mean that this basic principle takes precedence over other principles or strategies which we also call dialogic. In the case of the one dialogic principle, we are dealing with a constitutive feature of all use of language, in the case of several dialogic principles, with features which are either methodologically based and are therefore interchangeable, or which are only valid for individual dialogic action games.

The assumption of a basic dialogic principle implies a dialogic concept of language which is not at all new, but which has historical roots reaching a long way back. There are, for example, Georg Christian Füchsel's thoughts about the origin of language in 1773 (77): "...daß jeder Sprecher zugleich einen Anhörer erfordere, und ein einzelner, der von keinem andern was wüßte, hätte gar keinen Grund zum Sprechen". There is also Wilhelm von Humboldt's dialogic view of language of 1827 (138): "Es liegt aber in dem ursprünglichen Wesen der Sprache ein unabänderlicher Dualismus, und die Möglichkeit des Sprechens selbst wird durch Anrede und Erwiderung bedingt".

Such insights into the nature of our language may, at first glance, appear trivial; on closer inspection, however, they prove to be the central assumption of a dialogic theory of language. This assumption can be taken as the analytic key to all the ways we act with language. Wilhelm von Humboldt and Füchsel recognise the "dualism which is inherent in our language", and they justify their assumption with the possibility which exists in principle of "Anrede und Erwiderung", of initiative and reactive utterance, as we would say today. They thus point to a basic, generally valid principle which it is necessary to explicate.

In contrast to this, the traditional distinction between monologue and dialogue starts out from the level of realisation and subdivides our possibilities of language use according to formal situational points of view into two different types: Only patterns of action in which a speaker change occurs would be dialogic patterns of action.<sup>1</sup> A formal distinction of this type does not tell us much about the general functioning of our use of language; it does not really touch the universal dialogic principle in the sense of Füchsel and Wilhelm von Humboldt, which can only be grasped at the level of meaning. The distinction remains a terminological one which could be taken over into a dialogic theory of language; for the traditional terms monologic and dialogic name forms of communication which can certainly be distinguished at the level of realisation of patterns of action. At the level

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<sup>1</sup> A survey of the different uses of the term dialogue can be found in Stati (1982).

of communicative function, however, dialogic action games are performed with monologic as well as dialogic forms. Speech at the level of function is always to be analysed as dialogic speech, every individual speech act can be considered as dialogically oriented, and language itself can be most effectively described and explained from a dialogic point of view.

The basic universal dialogic principle thus rests on the insight that there is no individual speech act which is, taken on its own, communicatively autonomous. The smallest autonomous unit of communication is the sequence of action and reaction. The initiative action determines what reactions can be expected. These expectations result from the functional structure of the initiative action. The central problem of a dialogic speech act taxonomy is, therefore, to define the initiative acts functionally. An essential criterion for such a definition should be that we could grasp the nature of the individual action types in a way which shows that they are determined by our cognitive possibilities. Thus, at a decisive point, the affinity between linguistic action and cognition would become obvious.

First of all, however, I want to defend the dialogic view of language, which is my starting point, against some traditional objections, and then make some preliminary explanations which are necessary for an understanding of an action-based model of language description.

## 2 Language, Communication, and Dialogue

A dialogic concept of language rests on two basic assumptions:

- Language is primarily used for communicative purposes.
- Communication is always performed dialogically.

The objections to the first assumption are, for example, summed up by Chomsky (1988, p. 38) in a counter-thesis:

...human language is far more than a mere system of communication: Language is used for the expression of thought, for establishing interpersonal relations with no particular concern for communication, for play, and for a variety of other human ends.

The first area named as a non-communicative area of language use is the use of language to express thoughts. Chomsky, similar to Harman (1973), distinguishes between the use of language in communication and the use of language in thought.<sup>2</sup> But what exactly is happening when we use language in thought? I do not want to repeat the debate that took place between Chomsky and Searle in 1975 (Chomsky 1975, p. 55 ff. and Searle 1974). When we think in words we also communicate, we are engaged in self-communication/“Selbstgesprächen”. We are talking to ourselves, as Humboldt (1827/1963, p. 137 f.) expressed it so well: “Der Mensch

<sup>2</sup> In addition, we have the communicative use of language for the expression of thought (cf. Alston 1964, p. 22 f.).

spricht, sogar in Gedanken, nur mit einem Andren, oder mit sich, wie mit einem Andren, ...". Silently or quietly we explain our thoughts to ourselves, we enter a dialogic communicative action game with ourselves. We break down problems into questions which we then answer ourselves, we collect points of view in order to analyse a complex matter. We express our thoughts in order to make something clear to ourselves. A typical example of such "an inner communication between the earlier and the later self" is, according to Roman Jakobson (1971, p. 702), "the mnemonic knot on a handkerchief" which we make in order to remind ourselves to accomplish an urgent matter. Even in the so-called inner monologue, it turns out that there cannot be a monologue at a functional level. Whenever we speak, we speak to someone; whenever we express our thoughts, we express them for someone. If there is not a real interlocutor, then we invent a fictional one or slip into the role of our interlocutor ourselves. The so-called inner monologue also has the communicative purpose of all use of language—the purpose which defines communication in general, and which we grasp using the term "coming to an understanding". Therefore, it is not merely a pointless and unfortunate move to broaden the notion of communication; as Chomsky asserts, it is just seeing the essence of communication in every use of language.

Communication is not just transfer of information. An information theory model based on the transfer of a message via a channel from a sender to a receiver distorts our view and does not let us see the specific peculiarity of linguistic communication which lies in the fact that we act when we speak. Even when we pass on information, we are not just a sender which transmits a message. We have a communicative purpose which determines our linguistic action: Together with our interlocutor, we want to make a picture of the world, to reach an understanding about a matter. However, speech acts which inform include, with their communicative purpose of transmitting new information, only a part of our communicative activity. In addition, we want to influence the actions of our fellow beings, and we want to create reality with language.

We have thus come to Chomsky's second non-communicative use of language, which, in his words, has the purpose of "establishing interpersonal relations". This may remind us, first of all, of Jakobson's contact function (1960, p. 355 f.), of utterances with a phatic function, according to Malinowski (1923), primarily serving, according to Jakobson, to establish communication without being informative such as, for instance, utterances like *well* or *Do you hear me?* In connection with a speech act theory, it is the communicative purpose of a distinct speech act class, the declaratives, to build up interpersonal relations by means of language. In making the utterance, social reality is created. Thus, we maintain everyday social relations, for example, with neighbours, by greeting each other or by talking to each other in a type of conversation designed for that particular purpose, "small talk", which only serves to strike up social relations or keep them alive, or we found institutional relations by linguistically declaring them to be existent by means of declarative speech acts:

1. I hereby open the meeting.
2. War is thus declared.
3. I hereby christen you.

Finally, language use for play: Playing with language has no communicative purpose in the defined sense; it is a pleasant way of passing the time. Playing with language, with words does not, or does not exclusively, follow the rules of language. The use of language for play allows us to invalidate the rules which are normally valid in the use of language. Was Chomsky really thinking of the way we play with language when we ask the question *Which animal is in the cage?—The ape?* Language games in Wittgenstein’s sense cannot have been intended as their communicative function is not in doubt. It is, of course, possible to pursue the most varied nonlinguistic, non-communicative purposes with language, just as any object can be used for other purposes from the ones it was originally destined for. Thus, an iron or a flower pot could be used as a weapon, but this would not affect the actual purpose of the object in question. Similarly, the use of language for play does not have an impact on its actual communicative purpose.

Besides these objections of Chomsky’s, which seek to separate language from communication, there are certain recurring objections to a dialogic concept of language, whose aim is to separate communication from dialogue. Can communicative use of language exist which is not dialogue? Taking a dialogic concept of language as a basis excludes this possibility; communication is a dialogic action game. Even if we endorse the traditional formal concept of dialogue, we have to ask ourselves whether or in what sense “monologic communication” can exist. The concept of communication itself implies two communication partners—in other words, dialogic communication after all. Even so, some forms of communication are traditionally characterised as monologic, when—situationally conditioned—no reaction from the interlocutor is expected. Above all, written texts, books, and scientific articles, and also lectures when questions from the listeners are not customary, belong to this category. This area of texts which are, at the level of communicative function, certainly directed at a communication partner and can only formally not be considered dialogic is not a real challenge to a dialogic concept of language. Within it, the dialogue takes place that we call science, philosophy, and culture (cf. Putnam 1988, p. xii).

It is more difficult to deal with linguistic utterances which, some think, are, at the level of communicative function, not dialogic. In this connection, lyrical texts and certain types of speech act are discussed which seem not to involve a communication partner. Lyrical texts, which are not just analytically playing with language, perform, like all everyday linguistic and literary texts, a communicative function. The expression of one’s own feelings also has a communicative purpose. Why do we tell others or ourselves about the state of our emotional life? Because we want to talk to each other, because we hope to obtain relief in a communicative exchange, or because we want to let others share our feelings. Why should we speak, act through language, if this action was not directed at an opposite number or at ourselves? Even if particular speech act types such as assertions do not seem to involve an interlocu-

tor, since a corresponding formal marking is lacking (cf. Kasher 1989), it will not be possible to deny that they are by their function directed at a communication partner and relate to a reacting speech act. Thus, assertions aim at a speech act which accepts the assertion. Why else should assertions be formulated if they do not aim at an understanding with someone else or with the speaker himself? Language as a natural, social phenomenon has its constitutive purpose in coming to a communicative, and that means dialogic understanding.

### 3 Language as Action

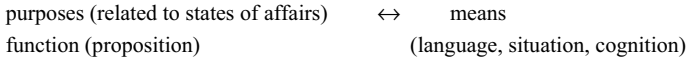
The history of linguistics could be written as the history of a succession of different concepts of language. After the concept of language as a system, which dominated structural and generative theories of language, came a concept of language which focused its attention on language in use as a natural phenomenon. This natural phenomenon can be investigated psycholinguistically, from a cognitive point of view; but in doing so, the communicative purpose of language is pushed into the background. The use of language for the communicative purpose of coming to an understanding is a social phenomenon which, because of its orientation towards a purpose, can only be described adequately on the level of action. We thus have to ask ourselves the fundamental question as to how the description of language can be based on a theory of action in such a way that the use of language is consistently explicable. How can the connection between language and action be grasped, as a merely metaphorical characterisation (Hundsnurscher 1989, p. 130) or as a genuine constitutive feature?

Actions in general are, as I understand it, defined as conventional correlation between purposes and means: The intentionality of action is already contained in the purpose—everyone who acts with a purpose acts intentionally.<sup>3</sup>

Even when we act with language, we are dealing with purposes and with means: We pursue certain purposes with linguistic means. The purposes are primary, they define the individual speech acts, and they determine which means we use for these speech acts. Purposes refer to the world. The combination of communicative purpose and state of affairs forms the meaning structure of every speech act; and for this, we can use Searle's formula  $F(p)$  (1969). I call this structure of meaning pattern of action. Patterns of action are realised by speakers with linguistic means in communicative situations, i.e. they are realised by utterances, not by sentences and not by utterance forms either. The term "utterance" already includes situational means. In the speech situation, visible material objects and conditions can become situational expression, for example, an open door, which in the speech act *It's draughty* need not be mentioned, but also institutional conditions and facial expressions and

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the discussion of the notion of action cf. von Wright (1971). The inner and outer aspect of action in the sense used by von Wright (p. 86), intentionality and changing the world, are included in my use of the notion of purpose.

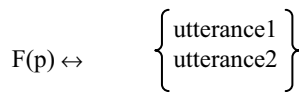
gestures are situational expressions (cf. Hundsnurscher 1989). In addition to linguistic and situational expressions, there are also cognitive means which, above all, take effect as inferencing processes. We thus obtain the following basic model of linguistic action:



This basic model indicates that linguistic action is a genuine form of action. We act on the one hand with language, just as we act on the other hand practically or physically. In both cases, we pursue purposes, only the means are, in each case, different. Bodily movements, too, are only acts when they fulfil certain purposes which can be related to them conventionally and intentionally. Dropping an object from fright is not an act, even if we can call this event a reflex action. But it is an action if it serves the purpose of demonstrating the effect of gravity.

Practical acts do not only have material purposes but also have communicative or cognitive purposes. Given a communicative function, they can replace speech acts. Thus, for example, closing a door can have the reactive purpose of fulfilling an action after an initiative directive speech act and thus replace a reactive speech act of consent to action, or it can be the material means for the directive initiative purpose of requesting quiet behaviour, and, as such, replace the speech act *I want to work now. Please don't disturb me*, or it can be the representative expression of one's wish to be alone. Although the material means in each case are the same—closing the door—three different types of practical action occur. On the other hand, the fact, demonstrated by this point of view, that practical and linguistic actions are mutually interchangeable shows that action by means of language is genuine action.

The basic model of linguistic action, as shown in the above figure, is universally valid and is still independent of a particular language. The component of the linguistic means is a component of sets which do not only contain one utterance form; for in realising a communicative function, we can—and this is probably universal—choose from a set of numerous forms of utterances which can be very differentiated. Our choice, however, is not arbitrary and the number of forms is not infinite. With reference to a particular language, the set of these utterance forms in the appropriate communicative situation defines the speech act grammatically (see Weigand 1984b):



The utterances here are grouped together in a set from the point of view of their communicative equivalence, i.e. we can achieve the same communicative purpose,



and we can perform the same speech act with each of these utterances. The communicative purposes have to be defined in a speech act taxonomy as fundamental and derived purposes, and the point of view of dialogicity has to be taken into account; that means that the purposes differ according to whether they are initiative or reactive (cf. Weigand 1989a). Communicative equivalence is thus a criterion which is established with reference to a speech act taxonomy.

The utterances differ according to the manner in which they express the communicative purpose  $F(p)$ , which may be classified as direct, indirect, or idiomatic:

$$\text{REQUEST (close (x,y))} \leftrightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} (4) \text{ Close the window.} \\ (5) \text{ Can you close the window?} \\ (6) \text{ When are you going to close the window?} \\ \dots\dots\dots \end{array} \right\}$$

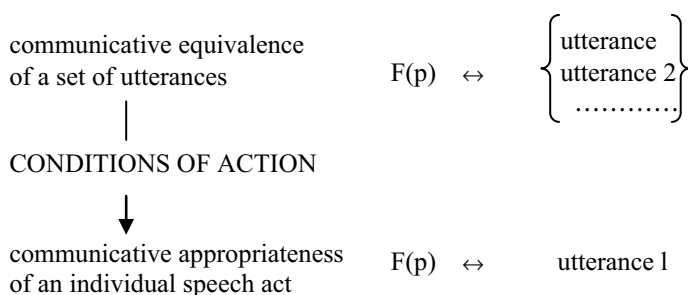
While in the direct speech act (see (4) in Fig. 3), the function is realised in accordance with the literal meaning of the sentence uttered, inferencing processes are added to the indirect speech act (see (5) in Fig. 3). Finally, in the idiomatic speech act (see (6) in Fig. 3), the function is realised by the whole utterance, and, in doing so, the literal meaning of the sentence uttered is blocked (cf. Weigand 1989a and 1992).

Apart from the fact that the three correlation types are functionally not quite identical, since in an indirect speech act a direct and an indirect purpose are realised simultaneously, the fundamental question must be asked about the criteria according to which we select a certain utterance in communication, if all of them are communicatively equivalent.<sup>4</sup> This question brings up the topic of the component of the action conditions. Conditions of action are certainly always present when we act: On the one hand, they are contained in the purposes; on the other hand, the means are also related to conditions, or situational means can be understood as conditions for linguistic means. However, conditions of action have a key function when we come to distinguish between communicatively equivalent utterances. The central question in this process of differentiation is: Under what conditions of action do we select on this occasion the one, and on the other occasion the other form of utterance?

The term “conditions of action” is not just used to refer to certain situations, to situational means, but at the same time refers to functional qualities which cannot be grasped using the imprecise functional term of communicative equivalence. Thus,

<sup>4</sup> In principle, Jakobson (1971, p. 704) has already answered this question: “...the two fundamental factors which operate on any level of language. The first of these factors, *selection*, ‘is produced on the base of equivalence, similarity and dissimilarity, synonymity and antonymity’, while the second, *combination*, the buildup of any chain, ‘is based on contiguity’”. The factor selection determines the appropriateness of the individual utterance in a certain context; the factor combination is based on the coherence of the subsequent speech acts.

some forms of utterances are especially appropriate for certain situations because they have a special functional quality. The example of indirect speech acts is well known, which on the basis of their special function as polite speech acts are, above all, suitable for situations in which an all-too-direct intervention in the scope of action of the other would be ruled out. Other speech registers, other levels of style, would be formal versus colloquial, humorous/witty versus neutral/serious speech. It would be the task of a discipline of pragmatic stylistics to differentiate between these fine functional and at the same time situational differences between individual utterances, to distinguish different conditions of action beyond the criterion of communicative equivalence. A discipline of pragmatic stylistics would allow us to get from the level of communicative equivalence of a set of utterances to the level of situational appropriateness of a single speech act:



An individual utterance from the set of communicatively equivalent utterances can be differentiated from the other utterances with regard to its appropriateness in certain communicative situations and with regard to the special function “F”, which this utterance performs in these situations. That means that the more precise formulation of the conditions of action also leads, in the end, to a double-sided model of correlation between purposes and means:<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> In contrast to my approach, which understands action as the relation of purposes and means, Hundsnurscher (e.g. 1989) starts from the assumption that speech acts are based on a tripartite constellation of purposes, utterance forms, and conditions (cf. for a discussion of both approaches, Weigand 1993). Also in Kasher’s view, purposes and means *are* essential components of the notion of a speech act but, in addition, he assumes roles played by whoever is involved in its performance and a product (cf. Kasher 1979). While these approaches have a common basis in the communicative purpose of the action, Motsch and Pasch (1987) are oriented towards, among others, Bierwisch (1980) and Grice (1975) and support a view of action which, because of different basic assumptions, contains a completely different conception of action. According to them, actions are based not on social purposes, but on aims, i.e. “cognitive representations of states of the world”, and on intentions of speakers, i.e. “cognitive representations of an attitude of *volition* towards a state of affairs in the mind” (p. 33) and are thus essentially mental concepts. Motsch and Pasch take no account of the peculiarity of social, purposeful action with regard to the mental domain as well as with regard to sign-theoretical relations. Viehweger (1989) also shifts his description of illocutionary acts into the mental domain of our systems of knowledge and takes as his starting point Motsch’s suggested characterisation of illocutionary acts. However, he then elucidates the

specific purpose	↔	specific means
DIRECTIVE/polite	↔	<i>Could you perhaps close the window?</i>
- leaves the scope of action of the other person unaffected		- indirect speech act, subjunctive, particle - to be recommended, for instance, in communicative situations with strangers

On the one hand, the special means of a linguistic, situational, and cognitive kind must be recognised which can be used in the case of a certain utterance, and on the other hand, the particular functional quality which corresponds to these means must also be recognised. Certain functions, of a literary kind, for example, are only understood when certain cognitive means, a certain amount of expert knowledge, is available. It is only when the conditions of action at the level of communicative appropriateness of an individual speech act are differentiated that the linguist can meet the criticism that is often made of speech act theory by literary scholars, sociolinguists, and psycholinguists that it does not take sufficient account of contextual factors. Behind this criticism is the partly justified dissatisfaction with the functional concept of communicative equivalence: It only covers the well-worn paths used in order to come to an understanding by means of language and leaves the subtle nuances of the situational appropriateness of an individual utterance to pragmatic stylistics. According to Kasher (1979, p. 48) and Blanshard (1954), “style is the feather in the arrow, not the feather in the hat”.

#### 4 Coming to an Understanding Versus Understanding/“Verständigung” Versus “Verstehen”

In contrast to practical actions, the purposes of our linguistic action always are dialogic-oriented purposes. Only the initiative and the reactive action together produce the smallest autonomous communicative unit which fulfils the purpose of coming to an understanding. The isolated individual speech act only has a heuristic function. It is not the understanding of the utterance of a speaker which constitutes a dialogic sequence but the reaction of the interlocutor to the initiative action of the speaker. In English, we have the difficulty of differentiating “Verständigung”/coming to an understanding and “Verstehen”/understanding. Coming to an understanding as a general communicative purpose, presupposes action and reaction: After an initiative action follows a reaction based on either a positive or a negative decision. It is only this reactive instruction which creates a dialogue, which makes up coming to an understanding in the sense that both partners have made their action positions clear to each other. Even the rejection of a reaction by an utterance like

(7) I don’t want to hear any more. That’s enough.

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component of the success conditions for an illocutionary act, COND knowledge, in such a way as to include—similar to my concept of action—both action aims and action conditions (p. 43).

only demonstrates that the validity of the speaker's position has been established dialogically.

While coming to an understanding describes action, understanding represents a mental precondition of linguistic action: The hearer-oriented side of the speech act. The hearer has understood the speech act when he has understood its functional structure  $F(p)$ . In this sense, understanding is the precondition for action, is the precondition for the reaction of the hearer who only becomes an interlocutor when he produces this reaction. In a competence model of linguistic action, we presuppose that the utterance of the speaker is understood and ask what reactions are opened up by the initiative function of action. It is only in a second step—in the case of difficult or disturbed understanding—that this aspect would become a central theme.<sup>6</sup>

Why in a concrete dialogue the interlocutor picks out any one way of reacting from all the possibilities available; why, in other words, he either reacts with a positive or negative decision or, for example, asks a question in return, is, however, not a question that could be answered by the linguist (cf. also Hundsnurscher 1989, p. 131). The linguist lists the different possibilities and describes their conditions. The individual decision for a particular possibility in performance depends essentially on the individual understanding of the circumstances of life, just as, in the final analysis, in a general sense—our individual understanding of the world determines our actions. Conditions of understanding therefore influence the history of the course of individual dialogues (cf. Fritz 1989); on the other hand, the totality of all possible courses of a dialogue are contained in the notion of pattern. The pattern or the grammar of a dialogic action game does not describe one example or one possible course, but the potential of all possibilities of action in the various moves which could be conventionally and rationally expected, so that the action game as a whole becomes comprehensible and predictable in its possible courses (cf. Hundsnurscher 1980).

The rules for the dialogic sequence of the individual speech acts or the sequencing rules for linguistic action are not established by the conditions for understanding, but can be derived from the initiative speech act or are already contained within the initiative speech act. Thus, the directive speech act

(8) Give me a stick.

in principle opens up the possibilities of consent to action in a positive or a negative form:

(9) a. Here it is.  
b. I haven't got one.

The material action of giving the stick can take over the function of the positive reactive speech act. In addition, there are various nonspecific possibilities of reac-

<sup>6</sup> Therefore, understanding/“Verstehen” cannot be as in Motsch and Pasch (1987, p. 33) action aim. Action theories which, following Grice (1975), include conditions of understanding as an element of the analysis of action, do not take account of the fact that understanding only becomes an object of enquiry when it becomes problematical (besides Motsch and Pasch (also p. 22 and p. 27) e.g. Meggle 1981; Fritz 1989).

tion which are generally possible and are not restricted to directive speech acts: You can leave the action game by making an obviously noncoherent utterance; it can be the case that the utterance has not been understood acoustically, and it is possible that the interlocutor wants more precise information about what was said by asking a question in return:

(10) What kind of stick do you mean?

A reactive question of this type indicates that in the concrete case dependent on the concrete interlocutor, comprehensibility was not already ensured to the necessary extent by the utterance of the speaker. In the concrete case, a lack of comprehensibility justifies the choice of the question as a reactive move. This move is allowed for in principle in the potential of reactive action as the possibility of asking for more precise information.<sup>7</sup>

If in concrete communication it turns out that the precondition of understanding is not given, then it has to be introduced in an action game of its own of ensuring comprehensibility, which has its own action rules that have so far been investigated only in part. If we assume a competence model of linguistic action which not only allows for the average speaker of the standard language but also for different levels of action competence, then we have, in the case of comprehensibility, above all grasped a didactic aspect which the speaker should take into consideration, quite in the sense of Fritz' "recipient design" (1991), but which cannot be the key to the constitutive rules of sequencing.

## 5 Speech Acts as Pragmatic Claims

The basic rules of the grammar of dialogic action are already contained in the purpose of the initiative speech act types. The quality that enables individual speech act types to be initiative, together with the specific qualities of the individual purposes, account for the way in which we can potentially react to an initiative action.

Using the example of the directive speech act *Give me a stick!*, we have already met the dialogic principle that is contained in the specific initiative action and which develops rationally and conventionally in the possibilities of reaction. The directive speech act is an initiative speech act because it makes a pragmatic claim on the interlocutor. Its specific quality is that of a claim to the performance of a practical action, which can be substituted by a reactive speech act which fulfils the claim in positive or negative form. This is the reactive speech act of *consent* to action. Even if the interlocutor refuses to perform the action, this minimal directive action game has achieved its communicative purpose of coming to an understanding: Both interlocutors have become clear about their respective positions regarding the action to

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<sup>7</sup> Therefore, in a more detailed description, not only for minimal sequences but also for longer dialogues, it must be taken into account that, secondarily, reactive speech acts can have an additional initiative function.

be taken. In the cases in which the action requested can be performed here and now, the initiative claim can be fulfilled by means of the practical action itself; in our case, the interlocutor gives the speaker a stick. The basic principle that the initiative action by its functional structure already determines the possibilities of reaction is untouched by this (cf. also Viehweger 1989, p. 45). In the case of a directive initiative action, this principle is set up on the level of linguistic action in the following rule of a grammar of dialogue:

DIRECTIVE ↔ CONSENT

In this abstract notation the action of *consent* contains the positive as well as the negative form.

At the same time, this rule for a minimal directive action game is one of the fundamental rules of a dialogic speech act taxonomy. The other initiative speech act types as dialogically oriented units also determine their reaction according to the scheme that I have just described using the example of the directive speech act.<sup>8</sup> The definition of the functional initiative units *F* or *F(p)* is therefore of decisive importance for the question of a speech act taxonomy.

In contrast to the empirical position of a speech act verb taxonomy, which attempts to obtain functions of action from an analysis of speech act verbs in individual languages, Searle (1979, p. 28), Dell Hymes (1977, p. 64 f.), and others have correctly pointed out that the individual speech act types have to be determined as functional, universal units. Seen from the position of a dialogic view of language, which is the only position to allow a unified description of all language use, we would add: They are to be derived by step-by-step differentiation from the general communicative function of coming to an understanding.

The first task which we are faced with is to functionally grasp that feature of a speech act that enables it to initiate a dialogic action game. Action and reaction, in the first instance, are only terms which categorise the function. In many cases, we may, already on the basis of the grammatical–lexical structure of an utterance, be able to ascertain whether the utterance is used initiatively or reactively—thus request sentences such as *Give me a stick!* are initiative, utterances such as *Immediately* or *You're right* are reactive—but it causes some difficulties to grasp this feature of [initiative versus reactive] for speech acts not only as a formal sequencing feature but also functionally.

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<sup>8</sup> The assumption of conversational analysis, which is also supported by Motsch (1989, p. 54), that there are only “a few illocutionary types” “which determine a linguistic reaction as the expected reaction”, results from a descriptive model which gives priority to empirical structure of the sequence of utterances. This approach therefore fails to take account of basic functional principles of conversation. In contrast to this approach, Viehweger (1989, p. 45 f.) assumes, as I do, that illocutionary knowledge also contains knowledge of the dialogic embedding of a turn and that therefore “the construction of conversations is based to a quite decisive extent on classes of illocutionary actions, that illocutionary knowledge is an extremely important domain of knowledge for constituting conversation”. However, he believes that the general validity of this assumption “cannot yet be postulated with certainty at the present stage of research”.

In a general form which is not yet specified according to individual speech act types, initiative speech acts are used to make pragmatic claims; reactive speech acts are used to fulfil them. By basing dialogic action on two action types whose difference is functionally defined as being making a claim and fulfilling a claim, we have left the position taken by orthodox speech act theory and have moved beyond its equation of speech act and illocution. Illocutionary initiative speech acts are correlated to reactive speech acts, which I—giving a more precise definition to the term—called perlocutionary (cf. Weigand 1984a). It is only the rationally and conventionally established interdependence between illocutionary and perlocutionary speech act which creates the minimal dialogic action game.

Basing the description of language on the dialogic principle is not just the result of a methodological choice but corresponds to a constitutive feature of all language use, to a constitutive feature of language as such. There is—for linguistic-functional reasons—no individual speech act which stands alone and is autonomous. Language use cannot be described from the speaker's perspective alone. The assumption that all speaker contributions are directed at someone, only demonstrates the deficiency of the monologic point of view. The dialogic phenomenon forms a structural level of its own on which the systematics of possible moves is described which the interdependence between the illocutionary and perlocutionary speech act opens up. As long as this level of structure is not recognised, there can be no uniform, and, in my opinion, also no systematic and adequate description. A purely monologic approach cannot reach the structural level of the dialogic phenomenon since it takes as its starting point only one type of action, the illocutionary, and includes the reactive element only as a formal, situational one and not as a functionally different phenomenon. In contrast to this, the monologic element is, in a dialogic approach, a partial aspect of the dialogic phenomenon and can only be described adequately in this way.<sup>9</sup>

In our derivation of a dialogic speech act taxonomy we have thus moved one first decisive step forward. We have—taking as our starting point the communicative purpose of coming to an understanding—split up the unit of the speech act into

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<sup>9</sup> The consequence of the insight that the smallest autonomous unit of communication is the sequence of action and reaction is that there can be no independent “speakers’ texts” of the type that Motsch (1989, p. 48 f.) assumes. While Motsch leaves the question open as to “whether—and if so in what sense—*independent speakers’ texts* can be understood as a special case of *dialogue texts*”, Brinker and Sager (1989) put forward two independent domains, the domain of monologic texts and the domain of conversations. Since they understand the concept of the communicative function as a monologic concept (p. 12) and consider the unity of conversation as being only thematically determined (p. 11), the aspect of turn taking remains a situational, formal feature which can add nothing as far as meaning is concerned to an analysis of the matter of conversation being investigated. Such a model of conversation analysis—to overstate it slightly—amounts therefore to an extension of the monologic view of texts to all texts and to a description even of conversations as monologic. However, a model of this type cannot be applied consistently, as the concrete analyses in the book itself show; for a dialogic principle creeps in (p. 69), which is not dissimilar to our dialogic principle. This contradiction between the general theoretical–methodological basis and individual cases of concrete analysis makes the limits of a monologic, topic-oriented view of texts clear. These limits can only be overcome in a dialogic model which bases dialogicity for all texts on the interdependence of initiative and reactive purposes.

speech acts which make claims and those that fulfil them, and have thus accounted for the dialogic unit of action and reaction. Before we now explain more precisely what pragmatic claims we are dealing with and in this way come to fundamental speech act classes, we can already characterise one fundamental speech act class by showing that in it, making and fulfilling a claim coincide: these are declarative speech acts. In making the utterance something is made to exist or be valid. The reaction of the interlocutor is therefore no longer necessary since the claim is fulfilled as soon as the utterance has ended. Thus the priest completes the baptism with the utterance *I baptise you...*—a reaction on the part of the person to be baptised or his godparent to confirm this is superfluous—or we create a certain institutional situation when we, for example, declare: The meeting is opened. The area of declarative speech acts is, however, much greater than we—generally or on the basis of Searle’s characterisation of this type of speech act—assume it to be and is not limited to so-called institutional speech acts. Perlocutionary fragments which confirm validity or existence occur. Thus, for example, the thanks which are expressed by an utterance such as *Thank you* can be confirmed by *You’re welcome*, or a congratulation *Congratulations!* is followed by *Thank you*.

The set of the other speech act types is, however, characterised by the fact that making a claim and fulfilling a claim are two sides of a complex dialogic action which are clearly separate. Illocution and perlocution cannot coincide here. We have to consider how these fundamental speech act types can be differentiated by means of a more precise explanation of the pragmatic claim. What kinds of pragmatic claims can we distinguish?

Our directive example *Give me a stick!* makes the pragmatic claim that the interlocutor should perform a practical action or complete a corresponding speech act which consents to the action. We could consider characterising a pragmatic claim of this type as a claim that something should become true. But I think that it is obvious that directive speech acts do not make a claim to truth but a claim to volition. We should not be the victim of a linguistic formulation and the supposed advantage that we do not, therefore, have to set up a new descriptive category.

If we define directive speech acts by means of a claim to volition,<sup>10</sup> then we can grasp their connection to interrogative actions/explorative speech acts in a way which demonstrates relatedness as well as difference: Exploratives also make a claim to volition. But they are different from directives in the object of this claim to volition. However, it is not very easy to grasp this object of the claim precisely, as the following examples show:

- (11) Don’t be so sad.—I’ll try.
- (12) Think.—I’ll make an effort.
- (13) Tell me where you were yesterday. I want to know.—All right, I’ll tell you. I was in the disco.
- (14) Advise me. What should I do?—I’ll try to advise you. If I were you I wouldn’t go there.

<sup>10</sup> This claim to volition is not restricted to a certain interlocutor. It can be, as is usual, directed at an action of the hearer but, in the same way, it can be directed at an action of the speaker(s): *Let’s start now*.

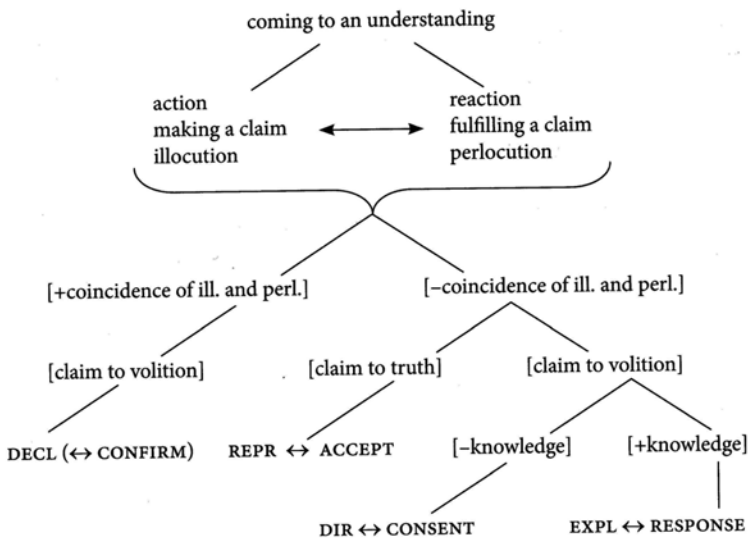


Directive speech acts obviously do not just invite someone to perform a practical action as is usually assumed but also direct someone towards a certain behaviour or towards cognitive or linguistic actions. Exploratives are therefore not, as Searle (1979, p. 14) suggests, a subclass of directives which could be characterised as attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to perform a speech act. As the reactive speech acts show, directives are oriented towards consent to action or behaviour and exploratives towards knowledge. The criterion that distinguishes between the two types of speech act is thus the criterion of knowledge, knowledge being understood as the missing element in the proposition or as the missing claim to truth for the proposition (cf. Weigand 1989a, p. 143 ff. concerning the definition of this criterion). This knowledge as a rule is given by a certain linguistic reaction which is defined as *response*. Responses in this sense are only secondarily representatives, primarily they do not issue a claim but being reactive speech acts, they fulfil the claim of exploratives. This claim is not merely a claim to knowledge but a claim to volition related to an action which provides knowledge. As these examples have made clear, initiative speech act classes *are* not only determined by their own intrinsic pragmatic claim but also at the same time by the specific reactive speech act which is correlated to them.

Declarative actions which we have already separated are also defined by a claim to volition: In this case, by making the utterance is intended to create validity or existence.

There remains the fundamental class of representative speech acts which makes a pragmatic claim to truth. This corresponds to the reactive speech act of *acceptance*.

Grasping in this way the basic pragmatic claims as a claim to truth and a claim to volition, we can derive fundamental speech act classes from the general purpose of coming to an understanding as is shown in the following figure:



ill. = illocution, perl. = perlocution, DECL = DECLARATIVE, REPR = REPRESENTATIVE, DIR = DIRECTIVE, EXPL = EXPLORATIVE

These fundamental speech act classes could now be differentiated further according to derived classes by specifying the action conditions which are contained in the purpose. Thus, for example, the pragmatic claim to truth of representative speech acts can be split up according to whether there is a simple or a modal claim to truth—[that it is so] versus [that it could/should/would be so]. Speech acts of believing, supposing come into the category of the modal claim to truth [that it could be so], deontic speech acts have the claim [that it should be so] and unreal/conditional speech acts come into the category of the claim [that it would be so]. The reactive speech act would have to be correspondingly modified in accordance with the initiative classes which have been differentiated in this way.

The derived function classes must then, in a third step, be connected with appropriate propositions, whereby subpatterns of a function class will emerge. For subpatterns understood in this sense as functional structures  $F(p)$ , special speech act verbs are often available. Thus, for example, the speech act verbs recommend, warn, advise can be analysed as expressions for the representative subpatterns of ASSTERTING that something is good/dangerous/expedient (cf. Weigand 1993). Here it becomes clear that the subject of a speech act taxonomy is different from the subject of a speech act verb analysis, but that both can be correlated to one another, in accordance with the action model of language, as units of purpose and units of means.

With the action types which we have distinguished in the speech act taxonomy, we have, in my opinion, accounted for all possibilities of acting with language. More complex dialogues in principle also move within this framework which is determined by the purposes of the fundamental initiative speech acts. In particular, in describing dialogues, besides the social purpose of the action, we could postulate different action goals of the participants (cf. Hundsnurscher 1989).<sup>11</sup> Thus someone seeking advice enters a dialogue of advising with the goal of getting advice; the goal of the adviser is to give advice. Goals, intentions of this type are mental concepts which—as becomes clear in our example—differentiate between the initiative and the reactive aspect of the claim/purpose which is valid for both interlocutors. In this case, the initiative aspect, in other words, the goal of the person seeking advice, as opposed to the reactive, should be considered primary. I think, Therefore, that a dialogue of advising can be understood, according to its communicative purpose, as a specific explorative action game, which begins with the question put by the person seeking advice: What should I do in this situation? The end of the action game comes when the claim of this interrogative action is fulfilled, when advice is given, i.e. when at least one possibility of acting has been shown to be expedient. Since the initiative purpose simultaneously contains the reactions that can be expected,

<sup>11</sup> This must be distinguished from models for the description of conversation which, as for example in Techtmeier (1984), are exclusively aim oriented. Since Techtmeier's concept of aim is expressed in general social and psychological terms, there are problems in applying the same concept of aim, differentiated according to fundamental and partial aims, to longer units of conversation as well as to individual steps in the conversation and conversational acts. In addition, a sociological-psychological concept of aim does not do justice to the language-specific rules of the action game; this becomes clear with the many problems which occur in Techtmeier's model in the description of the microstructure of conversation (p. 110 ff.). Regarding this, Techtmeier notes that the relation between her concept of aim and general aims in speech act theory is still largely unknown.

dialogues can, in my opinion, be classified on a global level as representative, directive, explorative, or declarative action games.<sup>12</sup> In complex dialogues as well as in minimal sequences, we act with linguistic means in a communicative situation towards an understanding or agreement concerning a social purpose. Dialogues also, therefore, conform to the correlation type of purposes and means which, in general, determine human action.<sup>13</sup>

The functional derivation of fundamental dialogic speech act types has to be justified, on the one hand, internally by means of its inner consistency and systematics; on the other hand, it relates externally on two sides to other systems, which should confirm the derivation. On the one side, we are led, as we have already seen with the speech act verbs, to the linguistic means with which we create utterance forms and which are then used in a situationally appropriate way; on the other side, we are led from the functional communicative structures to the structures and categories of cognition.

When we consider the linguistic means which are available for the realisation of the functional types in individual languages, then we are struck by the correlation with the sentence types—declarative, interrogative, and request. Sentence types are realised by means of the grammatical categories of mode, to which inflecting categories such as indicative and imperative belong and syntactic categories such as word order, and prosodic categories. It is only declarative speech acts that cannot be realised with these grammatical means alone; they require an additional lexical element (cf. Weigand 1989a, p. 221). In the case of direct initiative speech acts, we can say that there is essentially a 1:1 relationship between sentence type and illocution. With the grammatical categories of sentence types, we therefore have a fundamental division at the level of sentence which is in principle and probably universally available in the grammar of individual languages for the realisation of fundamental function classes.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> I think that I agree with the assumptions of Viehweger (1989, p. 45 f.), but also of Motsch (1989, p. 56), who thinks it is certainly possible that “dialogue structures can also be determined by means of the principles of illocutionary knowledge”. However, it seems to me that this assumption, to a certain extent, contradicts the thoughts he had previously just expressed regarding conversation analysis. Cf. note 6 above. Brinker and Sager (1989, p. 112) also consider that “the social function, the social purpose of conversations” could be the “basic criterion” for a typology of conversations. An assumption of this nature is surprising in view of the definition of the notion of conversation on which their book is based. Cf. note 7 above.

<sup>13</sup> In my opinion, even job interviews follow this pattern. It might appear as if the interlocutors went into the conversation not only with different aims but also with different purposes (explorative purpose “Who is the suitable candidate?” for the one who is carrying out the interview, versus representational purpose “I am the suitable candidate” for the applicant); however, an analysis of this type does not do justice to the character of a job interview as a conversation involving a number of people. The purpose of the conversation involving a number of people is to find out who the suitable candidate is. The purpose of the individual job interview is to test the representational claim of the applicant to be the suitable candidate.

<sup>14</sup> While in my approach the linking of sentence types and action functions is emphasised as a clear correlation which shows the right direction but which is in no way unambiguous, in Motsch and Pasch’s system (1987), the unambiguous correlation of “sentence moods” and “functions” plays a central role. However, with Motsch and Pasch, in some cases, the same terms are used to describe

This corroboration given to the functional taxonomy on the level of the direct speech act by linguistic means is independent of the question as to how we define the pragmatic claims as claim to truth and volition or as claim to truth and knowledge. However, if we trace back the path from the functional structures of language to our cognitive structures and thus face the difficult problem of the connection between action and cognition, then the approach represented by the claim to truth and claim to volition proves, I think, to be adequate, since it bridges the gap between our linguistic action and our cognitive abilities.

## 6 Action and Mental States

We act with language according to the rules and routines of language use which we have learned in the course of our acquisition of language. We have experienced how adults use language, how they can pursue different purposes with different utterances. We imitated these ways of use; they have become routines in our use of

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other phenomena and relations, so that it is difficult—especially in a footnote—to compare both approaches. The main difference to my approach is that Motsch and Pasch give a dominating role to grammatical classification. Although sentence moods are described with regard to their meaning as expressions of the attitude of the speaker, ultimately these speaker attitudes are assigned on a 1:1 basis to the sentence moods/sentence types (p. 45 f.). The sentence moods or the speaker attitudes expressed by sentence moods have, in their turn assigned to them on a 1:1 basis “a grammatically determined basic illocutionary function” (p. 53). In this way, the grammatical classification merges into the functional classification. The basic illocutionary functions are then further divided up using Searle’s speech act classes (p. 54). Instead of separating the functional phenomena (Searle’s speech act classes and their subdivisions such as assertion, reporting, promising, consenting, etc.) from the means (sentence moods etc.), defining the functional phenomena separately, i.e. functionally and analysing the means in connection with lexical means and then investigating the complicated correlation of functions and means, they take as their starting point the grammatical classification according to sentence moods and transfer these on a categoric 1:1 basis to speaker attitudes and basic illocutionary functions. In a number of different respects, problems result from this subordination of action functions to the dominating role of the grammatical means, for instance:

- Explicitly performative expressions are, in my opinion, treated counterintuitively as indirect speech acts since the distinction between and interaction between lexical and grammatical means has not been sufficiently reflected upon.
- It has not been recognised that declarative speech acts—both with regard to function (claim to volition with reference to existence/validity) and with regard to realisation (combination of lexical and grammatical means)—are a separate and distinct class and must under no circumstances be confused with representational speech acts (claim to truth, realisation is also possible by grammatical means only).
- No account is taken of the distinction between initiative and reactive speech acts regarding their function.
- The role of speaker attitudes has not, in my opinion, been made sufficiently clear.

The result is thus a classification of illocutionary actions (p. 54) which, in my view, confuses heterogenous elements and levels of means and function and correlates them with each other in a system which, in the final analysis, is grammatically determined and is therefore not appropriate for the subject “illocutionary action”.

language. These routines are partly founded on a rule-based connection between purposes and means; partly they are simply formal, learned habits. The question arises as to what role the concept of meaning plays in connection with this theory of use.

Meaning in the traditional sense of literal, situationally independent meaning has its place on the level of proposition; yet this level of proposition is not autonomous in a theory of use but is always dependent on the action type, according to the formula  $F(p)$ . Meaning in the traditional sense can, therefore, only have a heuristic function in the process of correlating purposes and means (cf. Weigand 1992).

Meaning qua meaning, as an entity that can be specified in terms of itself, does not exist (cf. also Alston 1964, p. 21). Meaning can only be represented by means of expressions. But what is it that we grasp with such expressions? Mental concepts like the image of a flower in the case of rose? In the name of the rose, this image disappears and makes room for free associations and uncertain suppositions. Linguistic action is expressed not with isolated expressions but with utterances. What is the point of, for example, assuming a mental concept of colour for the meaning of *verde/green/grün* used in utterances? The ways words are used cannot be derived from such a concept, as Hundsnurscher (1988) has shown for German: we have *grüne Witwe*, *grüner Junge*, *grüner Hering*, *grünes Holz*, *grünes Gesicht*, and numerous other meaning positions of *grün*. Comparison with other languages reinforces this finding: So we may, on the one hand, find comparable usages across linguistic boundaries, but on the other hand, further usages specific to individual languages occur, such as in Italian *essere al verde*, *essere verde*, *verde dall'invidia*, *trovarsi nel verde degli anni* and in English *green-horn*, *to keep a person's memory green*, *green-eyed*, *green with envy*, *a green old age*, to name but a few examples. The meaning of words and utterances can only be grasped in use. Knowledge of rules and routines of use is stored in our heads, so to speak as the mental duplicate of use, and can be retrieved there, but we cannot derive use from a mental representation of meaning. "One cannot guess how a word functions", as Wittgenstein (1968, p. I 340) said, putting it in a nutshell, "one has to *look* at its use and learn from that".

The gap between language use/language action and mental representation seems to be unbridgeable. If, however, we derive the possibilities of our linguistic action from a claim to truth and volition, then, suddenly the linking path appears, on which mind and action meet. Linguistic action becomes visible as a mirror of the mind, in a different sense, however, than this metaphor has been used up till now (cf. Chomsky 1975, p. 4 and Dascal 1983). If we, like Fodor (1987, p. x), assume that the mental states which a human being is capable of, according to a "commonsense psychology", belong to the areas of belief and desire, then these mental states find their counterparts on the level of action in a claim to truth and volition. The possibilities of our linguistic action are—how could we expect it to be otherwise—conditioned by the nature of our mental states. We orientate ourselves in relation to the world with these mental states of belief and desire, and we express these mental

states in language by means of speech acts which make a claim to truth or volition. In this sense, our mental states determine our linguistic actions.<sup>15</sup>

We could be satisfied with this result which connects areas that have, up to now been separate, if it was not for an ensuing question, which is at present in interdisciplinary studies one of the most controversial questions of all (cf. for example, Searle 1990; Churchland and Churchland 1990). Mental states like belief and desire are not specifically human states; the behaviour of animals is also directed by means of belief and desire. Thus, a cat will go into the kitchen because it knows/assumes/believes that its food is there, and it will hunt mice on the basis of desire. What, then, does the specifically human behaviour consist of that distinguishes human beings from animals, and also from computers? Is there such a specific element, or will one day computers think and act like human beings?

The comparison with the cat takes us, I think, one step further. Animals are obviously completely fixed to empirically based assumptions (the food found daily in the kitchen) and physiologically determined instinctive actions, which can only be corrected by other kinds of behaviour in which they have been trained by human beings. In contrast to this, belief and desire are to a certain extent freely at the disposal of human beings, who can control and simulate these states. They can rise above the empirically given state of affairs and the physiological processes of their body by rationality,<sup>16</sup> and also by wilful arbitrariness. In contrast to animals and computers, human beings have consciousness, in the sense that they can reflect about themselves and call themselves in question.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> If I consider the mental states of “belief” and “desire” to be basic, then I leave the question open as to the relation that affective states have to these areas of cognition and volition. In my opinion, this question addresses a separate area of experience. Searle’s analysis of affective states (1983, p. 29 ff.) also makes clear that they can only very inadequately be described as a conjunction of belief and desire (cf. also Kenny 1963, p. 100). Fodor does not discuss this problem explicitly, but connects belief and desire to the areas of thought and (1987, p. xii), to which, in my opinion, affective states do not belong. In the literature concerning action theory, assumptions are made which at first glance seem to correspond to what I have here described as the mental basis of our linguistic actions. Goldman (1970, p. 72 ff.), for example, views acts as caused by wants and beliefs. But what he understands by wants as causes corresponds to intentionality in my notion of action and cannot be equated with the mental domain of desires which can be assigned to this notion of action on another level; i.e. similar terms are used to express quite different facts—a causal versus an intentional notion of action (cf. von Wright 1971; Anscombe 1957).

<sup>16</sup> I should like to refer to an interesting counter-view. Obviously, Winograd and Flores (1986, p. 146) have also followed the basic assumptions of Dreyfus (1979) and the phenomenology of Heidegger’s when they maintain that our actions could not be adequately described in terms of rationality. “We do not act as a result of consideration but as a way of being”.

<sup>17</sup> As opposed to this view, Searle (1983, p. x and 1) considers human behaviour determined by intentionality defined as the feature of directedness. Since, however, intentional mental states are common to both human beings and animals, the specifically human quality is not delimited by intentionality in Searle’s sense, but only by the ability of self-reflection which at least partially makes free will possible in the case of human beings. If we assume mental states of belief for animals too, then we concede that they can think, at least in a rudimentary form (cf. also Griffin 1990). To think means, I believe, making connections. The cat makes connections between given empirical conditions and its needs. The computer makes connections according to data and rules that human beings have fed into it. Accordingly, not only human beings have the ability to think but also

The reference to “ratio” in human behaviour seems to me to be especially instructive, particularly for linguists in the present discussion and should be carefully considered in its consequences. Using language, we act in complex games and are always dependent on manifold relations which cannot be accounted for with the concept of the sign, not even with a pragmatically extended one. The interlocutors do not send linguistic products to and fro, which as tightly tied up or even manipulatable packages of signs always contain expression and content within them. They introduce themselves with their communicative purposes into the communicative situation as actors. “Man is the principle of action”, as Aristotle said (1972, p. 53). Of course, we also make our communicative claims in language with the help of expressions which can be described as signs, but, seen as a whole, the concept of the sign does not do justice to the complexity of the correlation between purposes and means, and the rational use and selection by the speaker of different possibilities of action. Our use of language as dialogic action can scarcely be explained if derived from a concept of language as sign system.<sup>18</sup> On the contrary, it is determined by the concept of purpose and its features of rational expectability and conventionality as rule and routine.

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animals and computers. But while human beings can control their thinking themselves, can determine the rules of their thinking themselves, the thinking operations of animals, like computers, are controlled externally, are dependent on the one hand on empirical circumstances, and on the other on human beings. Even if the idea of a self-programming computer does not remain Utopian, a human being will be at the starting point of the operations of a neuronal computer of this type. Human beings alone can both initiate their thinking themselves and question it again and again, justify and substantiate it anew and put it in new contexts, even if the end or the starting point of their thinking remains an open question. For what, in the final analysis, is our consciousness other than a material, biological phenomenon? (cf. also Armstrong 1981, p. 15)

<sup>18</sup> In almost all so-called action-oriented approaches to the description of language, the concept of action is apparently without any problem connected with the concept of sign, thus, for example, with Motsch and Pasch (1987, p. 26): “...for communicative actions, for actions with (strings of) signs”, and even with Wittgenstein (1968, p. I: 496), obviously without seeing the great question behind it: whether an action-theory approach is in any way compatible with sign-theory considerations. In my view, not only theory of use but also action theory and sign theory are mutually exclusive (cf. also Halliday 1991).

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# Philosophy and Psychoanalysis: Wittgenstein, on “Language-Games” and Ethics

Felice Cimatti

**Abstract** In this chapter, I propose to take seriously the comparison between Freudian psychoanalysis and Wittgenstein’s conception of philosophy. Philosophy and psychoanalysis have in common two facts: they are activities that have to do with the analysis of language, and they have an ethical goal. Both, in fact, mean to liberate the human body, and to make it able to move freely. The fundamental concept that allows this comparison is that of “surveyable representation” (*übersichtliche Darstellung*). From this point of view, the main concern of Wittgensteinian philosophy is ethics.

**Keywords** Freud · Wittgenstein · Psychoanalysis · Philosophy · Surveyable representation · Ethics

## 1 Introduction

Each social practice implies and presupposes a particular use of language. Wittgenstein called this inextricable interrelation between language and human social practice “language-game.” In this chapter, I analyze a particular “language-game,” the philosophical one. According to Wittgenstein, philosophy is not a theoretical activity, that is, an activity which aims to reach a certain conceptual clarity or to elucidate the hidden logic of our language and thoughts. From this point of view, Wittgenstein’s conception of philosophy is quite similar to the ancient one: Philosophy is an activity which aims to enable everyone to live a just life (what Wittgenstein called a “decent” life). Since all human activity is interlaced with language, according to Wittgenstein, *philosophy*—like *any other* human activity—is a particular “language-game,” which requires the presence of two *conversational* roles (even if at times the two roles can be instantiated at different moments by a single person): The first one is the role of someone who asserts something, and the second one is a critical role in respect to the first one. For example, the first “voice” says

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that “a game is an activity such and such,” that is, the *essence* of game is such and such. The second “voice” does not directly criticize this definition, rather she/he proposes another example of game which relativizes the alleged essence of game. The first “voice” is somewhat trapped into a linguistic definition which is so narrow that it prevents her/him from “seeing” how many games really exist which the alleged essence does not consider. This is not a theoretical problem only, because the very idea of “language-game” implies that an “inadequate” way to speak implies an “inadequate” way to act, too. Back to the example of defining what a game is: the first “voice” is unable to take into account all phenomena she/he claims to consider. That means that her/his actions in respect to “games” will be limited by an inner brake—the alleged game “essence”—she/he is not aware of. That is, her/his behavior is not as free as it could be. According to Wittgenstein, philosophy is a *therapeutic* activity just because its aim is to *free* the human being from the inner cages that an inappropriate use of language entails. From this point of view, the similarity of Wittgenstein’s conception of philosophy and psychotherapy/psychoanalysis are made explicit. Both are mainly *verbal* (in particular *conversational*) activities which allow the human being to become aware of, therefore freed from, the internal language constrictions which limit human freedom.

## 2 A New Key for an Altered Lock

The relationship between Wittgenstein and psychoanalysis is well studied, but controversial (Peterman 1992; Bouveresse 1995; Mancina 2002; McGuinness 2002; Cioffi 2009; Heaton 2010; Burton 2011). In this chapter, I explore this relationship in a different way; rather than directly addressing the topic of the alleged Wittgenstein–Freud connection, I will try to show how the later Wittgensteinian philosophical style is deeply influenced by the “*talking cure*.” What I wish to demonstrate is how such a style is not simply a style: that is, the particular way of proposing and discussing arguments in *Philosophical Investigations* is not another Wittgensteinian oddity (Baker 2004; Purton 2013). What Wittgenstein derives from Freud is the attitude to pay close attention to what a person actually *says*. That is, what Wittgenstein learned from Freud was an extreme attention to the “manifestations” of language (Johnston 1993). Despite what Freud himself thought of his own scientific work, what he really *did* was listen to the analysand’s own words and to paraphrase them in *another* way. Freud described such a paraphrase as an interpretation (even if in a later phase of his theory he defined them more humbly as “constructions in analysis”; Freud 1937), but one is not obliged to agree with such a self-description. That is, the factual validity of Freud’s work does not imply the validity of the theory he used to explain what he believed he was doing. Adopting a simpler and more sober view of Freud’s work allows Wittgenstein to address what always remained one of his main worries: how to address ethics, since “*It is clear that ethics cannot be expressed!*” (Wittgenstein 1979, p. 78):

I cannot bend the happenings of the world to my will: I am completely powerless. I can only make myself independent of the world—and so in a certain sense master it—by renouncing any influence on happenings. The world is independent of my will. (p. 73)

On the one hand, Wittgenstein never dismisses this early idea; nevertheless, on the other side, he never gives up the urgent need to find a way to make ethics possible (Radford 1989; Mulhall 2002), that is, a way to imagine a “decent” life. What Wittgenstein finds in Freud’s actual work with language, is the very basic idea that an ethical stance practically means the capacity of adopting another point of view—seeing another *aspect*—in respect to the world. Ethics is not concerned with willingness or reflection, ethics is not a state of mind, but rather ethics is about the possibility of *seeing* the world in different and unexpected ways (Lycan 1971; Budd 1987; Genova 1995; Baz 2000; Mulhall 2001). Freud’s example showed that such a shift is only possible through the cooperation of a person—the analyst, or someone who embodies such role, like the philosopher—who helps another person, the analysand (the two roles can indeed be played by a single person) to autonomously change her own mind. In human beings such a shift implies the mediation of language. For example, a plain description of Freud’s analytical work when “interpreting” a dream is that he is showing the dreamer another way of *imagining* his own life (Sigmon 1985): “Freud’s idea: in madness the lock is not destroyed, only altered; the old key can no longer open it, but a differently configured key could do so” (Wittgenstein 1998, p. 39). Psychoanalysis is the verbal technique which provides the new “key”—a new aspect of an old object—which can open the “altered” lock.

After a discussion on what constitutes a language-game, I will show that the psychoanalytical language-game is somewhat similar to the philosophical language-game. Both psychoanalytical and philosophical language-games share a similar goal: to free our lives from the impasse they have fallen into, namely particular “aspects” of the situations in which we live, which block our movements: “Philosophy is a struggle against the bewitchment of our understanding by the resources of our language” (Wittgenstein 1953, § 109).

### 3 “Language-Games” and Human Bodies

In *Philosophical Investigations*, rather than simply considering language as a communicative or cognitive device, Wittgenstein prefers to speak of language-games (Black 1979; Hintikka 1979; Rubinstein 2004; Sluga 2011, in particular, Chap. 4). This shift was intended to promote a new way of thinking about language. The usual metaphor for language is considering it a communicative device (Reddy 1979), that is, as a medium (mainly verbal) which conveys concepts from one mind to another mind. In such a metaphor, words and sentences carry their meanings just like the masons’ wheelbarrows carry bricks. According to Wittgenstein, what is wrong with such a metaphor is that it tacitly implies that language and the world are somewhat separate from each other, like wheelbarrows from bricks—a brick does not need wheelbarrows in order to exist and vice versa. That is, with such a model we conceive of language as if it was an autonomous entity in respect to human life and body: on the one hand, language, on the other hand, the human mind, as if a *human* mind could exist which is not able to use language: “The terms ‘language’ and

‘grammar’ in *Philosophical Investigations* ought not to be read as referring to some literally surveyable ‘entities’ that are, in principle, separable from our practices and our lives in the world” (Hutchinson and Read 2008, p. 156). On the contrary, in adopting the language-game metaphor, Wittgenstein wants to stress that language is not a unitary system (in contrast to how he thought of language in the *Tractatus*), and that it is mainly an activity. The general point is that “there is, as a very general fact of natural history, a single form of life common to all mankind” (Garver 1990, p. 200), and such a human “form of life” is inseparable from language (Taylor 1985; Anderson and Lightfoot 2000; Hanfling 2002; Ribes-Iñesta 2006).

The first example of a language-game Wittgenstein presented in *Philosophical Investigations* is the famous case of the builder and his assistant:

[T]he language is meant to serve for communication between a builder A and an assistant B. A is building with building stones: there are blocks, pillars, slabs and beams. B has to pass him the stones and to do so in the order in which A needs them. For this purpose they make use of a language consisting of the words “block”, “pillar”, “slab”, “beam”. A calls them out; B brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such-and-such a call.—Conceive of this as a complete primitive language. (Wittgenstein 1953, § 2)

The first characteristic, often unnoticed, in this “primitive language” is that it is a “game.” A game is played just because it is enjoyable to play. The first motivation for playing lies in playing itself. At the same time a game it is played because one wants to win—that simply means that each game has an end state which is pleasant to reach—for whatever reason it is pleasant. In this case, the end state is the complete building of the house. Usually a game implies more than one participant; sometimes the other participant can be represented by the casual disposition of pieces before the game begins (as in *solitaire*). It is important to note that a game is expected to involve more than one role, otherwise the game is not enjoyable (this is confirmed by the case of someone who cheats in *solitaire*; one cheats in order to defeat the other “participant,” even if that player does not really exist). That is, a game seems to imply at least two functional roles (even if the two roles do not correspond always to two different persons). This is a very important characteristic of every game; its functioning requires the presence of at least a *couple* of roles.

In this “primitive” language-game, the two participants, builder A and assistant B, work together to reach the expected end state for such a game. Wittgenstein *emphasizes* the different roles of A in respect to B: A “calls” the words which correspond to the “stones” he needs; B fetches them and passes them to A. The first example of Wittgenstein’s “language-game,” and a simpler, more basic one, is a situation where command and teaching weave together: “We can also think of the whole process of using words in (§ 2) as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language” (§ 7). The reference to the “children” is important because it stresses a point that one can find in a lot of other language-games: more than is generally expected, language has to do with learning, that is, language is mainly an impersonal teaching device. In this sense in almost every language-game there is a child, even if it is a very old one. That is, there is always some teaching force in language, even if there is no teacher in the actual language-game. Language teaches the child how to do something: how to reach an object; for example: “The

word ‘language-game’ is used here to emphasize the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life” (§ 23).

According to the usual conduit metaphor, language serves to communicate thoughts. This is true, but incomplete and quite misleading. Take the language-game of the builder and his assistant: in this case, B does more than bring the requested stones to A. When A says “block” he causes B to think of a particular object. B has already seen blocks, but when he learns to associate them with a verbal label, he also learns to think of them when he cannot directly perceive them. What B learns is not only what object corresponds to what name, he acquires also a new perceptual and cognitive ability: to pay attention in a selective way to particular aspects of objects (Fulkerson and Haaf 2003; Adamson et al. 2004; Brooks and Meltzoff 2005; Waxman and Gelman 2009). The ability to name an object enormously enlarges the range of what one can do with it; now it is possible to think of it when it is absent. A whole new spectrum of activities arises: “Giving orders, and acting on them—Describing an object by its appearance, or by its measurements—Constructing an object from a description (a drawing)—Reporting an event—Speculating about the event—Forming and testing a hypothesis—Presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams—Making up a story; and reading one—Acting in a play” (Wittgenstein 1953, § 23).

What Wittgenstein is saying is that learning language-games does not only improve humans’ abstract abilities, it implies a much more radical change in the human body. When one is able to construe an “object from a description (a drawing),” for example, his whole *bodily* capacities are changed. It is important to stress this point, because there are full-blown human bodies at the bottom of language-games. Without such a “bedrock,” language-games are not possible. Wittgenstein carefully distinguishes between a “rule,” which is explicitly learned, and “regularity,” which is not learnable; on the contrary, it is the biological foundation of the capacity to follow a rule (Gallese et al. 2004; Becchio and Bertone 2004; Cimatti 2013a). The (logical) necessity of such a distinction is evident when one confronts himself with the impossibility of learning the (meta) rule of following a rule:

Following a rule is analogous to obeying an order. One is trained to do so, and one reacts to an order in a particular way. But what if one person reacts to the order and training *thus*, and another *otherwise*? Who is right, then? Suppose you came as an explorer to an unknown country with a language quite unknown to you. In what circumstances would you say that the people there gave orders, understood them, obeyed them, rebelled against them, and so on? Shared human behaviour is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language. (Wittgenstein 1953, § 206)

The assistant B has learned that when the builder says “block” he has to fetch the corresponding object and pass it to A. We can imagine that the “training” consists in examples of orders and their fulfillments. At a certain point the assistant is expected to be able to go on alone when A calls for a new object, because—A’s thought could be this—B has “learned” how to participate to the language-game in a competent manner. The crucial point is that no one taught B how and why to go on; after a certain period of training B is implicitly expected to “know” how to go along without any other instruction. “Regularity” is a tacit knowledge:

Let's imagine that the people in that country carried on usual human activities and in the course of them employed, apparently, an articulate language. If we watch their activities, we find them intelligible, they seem 'logical'. But when we try to learn their language, we find it impossible to do so. For there is no regular connection between what they say, the sounds they make, and their activities; but still these sounds are not superfluous, for if, for example, we gag one of these people, this has the same consequences as with us: without those sounds their actions fall into confusion as I feel like putting it. Are we to say that these people have a language: orders, reports, and so on? There is not enough regularity for us to call it "language". (§ 207)

"Regularity" is the implicit "shared human behaviour," the common "system of reference" that allows humans to learn explicit rules, like the rules that regulate language-games. Without such a bedrock no language-game would be possible:

"How am I able to follow a rule?" If this is not a question about causes, then it is about the justification for my acting in this way in complying with the rule. Once I have exhausted the justifications, I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: "This is simply what I do" (§ 217).

At the very end there are no more justifications, because "When I follow the rule, I do not choose. I follow the rule blindly" (§ 219). A justification can exist for a single rule, but not for the regularity that makes any rule possible. The point is that the language-game is grounded on a biological bedrock (Gallese 2008; Perlovsky and Ilin 2013), and such a bedrock is the actual life we humans live. But is this a "positive" thesis? At the very end, is Wittgenstein asserting something akin to a philosophical thesis? Obviously not. When he writes of a "bedrock," what he wants to do is to get rid of the philosophical—i.e., pathological—need for further justification: a "bedrock" is natural in the same and simple sense that flying is natural for a seagull. It means that we live in a certain manner, and such a way of living is the ultimate bedrock: "What has to be accepted, the given, is—one might say—*forms of life*" (Wittgenstein 1953, *Philosophy of Psychology—A Fragment*, IX, § 345), where the stress is on the plural "forms" (there is no such a thing as *the* human way of living). This is a point worth remembering, as we will see in the following paragraphs, because the therapeutic work of philosophy is positioned precisely in opposition to the illusion of any metaphysical—that is, unquestionable—bedrock.

What can we find at the foundation of this analysis? At the end there is the body, like there was a body at the very beginning. This is a point to note, because it will have important consequences when the relationship between philosophy and psychoanalysis is addressed. According to Wittgenstein, language is neither a communicative nor a cognitive device. Obviously it is both, but it is also much more, it is what makes human life, *qua* human, possible. Take another example: a seagull is that life which is impossible without wings. If someone would say that the wings are the (bodily) instrument the seagull uses to fly, that would be quite a strange assertion, because there is simply no wingless seagull; that is, is impossible to define "seagull" as an animal which does not fly. The same holds for human beings and language; there is no speechless human (this does not imply that a speechless human body has not to be considered in an ethical manner; human biology and ethics are different. Wittgenstein's point is that what makes a body of *Homo sapiens* species a *human* body is language; but this consideration absolutely does not prevent attributing (human) rights to speechless creatures):

One can imagine an animal angry, fearful, sad, joyful, startled. But hopeful? And why not? A dog believes his master is at the door. But can he also believe that his master will come the day after tomorrow?—And *what* can he not do here?—How do I do it?—What answer am I supposed to give to this? Can only those hope who can talk? Only those who have mastered the use of a language. That is to say, the manifestations of hope are modifications of this complicated form of life. (If a concept points to a characteristic of human handwriting, it has no application to beings that do not write). (Wittgenstein 1953, *Philosophy of Psychology—A Fragment*, I, § 1)

A dog can be angry or hopeful. But a dog cannot hope that its master will come the day after tomorrow. A concept like the “day after tomorrow” seems to be a concept of which only a body capable of verbal language can conceive. It is a concept that one can focus on only if there is a word or a sentence to represent it. That is, a concept like the “day after tomorrow” would not exist without the words that formulate it. The dog’s language cannot formulate these kind of sentences; therefore, a dog cannot conceive of a concept like this one. What is important to note is that a concept like the “day after tomorrow” greatly extends what a body can do and imagine. The actions of someone who does not think these kinds of concepts are limited to what the body can directly do: its imagination arrives where its limbs arrive. On the contrary, the human body extends to where the individual’s thoughts arrive (Menary 2010). Since what a body can think of depends on what he can formulate verbally, it is literally true that “*the limits of my language mean the limits of my world*” (Wittgenstein 2002, § 5.6). A human body lives in a material world, and what a body can do in that world depends on what he can imagine and think; since there is a direct connection between languages, thoughts, and actions, the language arrives *when and where* the body arrives. That means that the body’s freedom depends on the relationship he entertains with “his” language.

The “language-game” image reveals an unsuspected ethical issue. The crucial question is: who uses whom? Is it the human body which uses language, or it is the other way round, that is, is it the language which uses the human body? If thinking is inseparable from language, how many times does the problem that someone is tormented by really lie in its own life rather than only in the language and life-form it is connected to and articulated in? “The world and life are one” (Wittgenstein 2002, § 5.621), the world’s limits are determined by language; therefore, our own life depends on the position we assume regarding language. The problem that Wittgenstein keeps facing—from *Tractatus* to his last writings—is finding a way to imagine how to come to terms with “this complicated form of life”: “What business is that of yours? Look after making *yourself* more decent!” (Wittgenstein 1998, p. 35).

#### 4 “When Language Goes on Holiday”

If one well keeps in mind the persistent ethical background of Wittgenstein’s analysis of language (Johnston 1999; Diamond 2000), the connection between “language-games,” philosophy, and psychoanalysis becomes more clear. To put it explicitly, the problem is this: is it language which thinks and acts through our bodies,



or is it the other way round? Both alternatives are somewhat excessive and therefore wrong, but the ethical point remains where to place the human body in respect to language. Both alternatives are false because no human body exists without language; and ethics cannot exist without a language-using human body. Therefore, the possibility of a human body released by language does not exist. Nevertheless, ethics is the queer position of a body which is naturally placed within language but at the same time tries to place itself outside language (in this position only it can try to disentangle when *the body* is thinking, and when *language* is thinking through it): “The subject does not belong to the world: rather, it is a limit of the world” (Wittgenstein 2002, § 5.632). Ethics is placed at the boundary of language, the only place where it could be possible to separate the body from language. The obvious problem is that such a place simply does not exist (where language ceases to exist is exactly where the human ceases to exist too). For this reason, Wittgenstein always presents language both as a disease and a therapy; in particular, according to Wittgenstein, philosophy is the therapeutic attempt to cure the body which is sick of language through another particular “language-game,” one that looks for a “surveyable representation” (Wittgenstein 1953, § 122). But what does it mean that language thinks in our place? That is, what is the language sickness?

This is connected with the conception of naming as a process that is, so to speak, occult. Naming seems to be a strange connection of a word with an object.—And such a strange connection really obtains, particularly when a philosopher tries to fathom the relation between name and what is named by staring at an object in front of him and repeating a name, or even the word “this”, innumerable times. For philosophical problems arise when language *goes on holiday*. (Wittgenstein 1953, § 38)

Language “*goes on holiday*” when one is speaking without any responsibility with respect to what she is saying. One might simply repeat what the situation suggests—as if the situation itself was speaking through the body of the speaker (like when a radio speaker diligently reads the news), or one might take a stand with respect to what she is saying and thereby take responsibility for one’s speech. Take the case of someone who is speaking about the people who courageously escaped from starvation and war in North Africa, looking for salvation in Europe. One can say that they are “clandestine immigrants”—like rats that carry a dangerous infection—or one can name them as “human beings,” stressing the point that they are like us, normal people who are rightly looking for a better life (that is, they do what *we* would do if we were in a similar situation). In the first case one just repeats the bureaucratic and police terminology, which transforms a human affair into an administrative and impersonal issue; in the second case, the focus is on the deep and unavoidable similarity between them and us. This is not a simple terminological shift, because the use of one expression entails a net of further concepts and actions that in the other case would not get involved. It is important to note that the second phrasing is not intrinsically better than the first one. The ethical point is not that only one statement is the right one, the point is that the responsibility of thinking implies taking into account more than one aspect of the object we are confronted with: “the search for liberating words is probably endless. For it needs to be continually remade, re-undertaken, as

cultural conditions change, as personal life-trajectories and philosophical educations proceed and change, and so on. And in any case, even very well-chosen words will tend to ‘ossify,’ over time” (Read 2005, p. 98).

When the language one speaks presents a situation as if it had just one aspect, the risk of a “bewitchment of our understanding” presents itself: the bewitchment lies in the fact that language is transparent, that is, we use it but we are not aware of using it. It seems as if there was no language between us and the world: such a situation “is like a pair of glasses on our nose through which we see whatever we look at. It never occurs to us to take them off” (Wittgenstein 1953, § 103). One believes it is possible to describe a situation as it really appears, while in fact one can be, at best, a sort of ventriloquist.

The problems arising through a misinterpretation of our forms of language have the character of *depth*. They are deep disquietudes; they are as deeply rooted in us as the forms of our language, and their significance is as great as the importance of our language.—Let’s ask ourselves: why do we feel a grammatical joke to be *deep*? (And that is what the depth of philosophy is). (§ 111)

From this point of view, philosophy is a kind of sickness which affects nonphilosophers too. Take the case of one who questions whether a feeling is “true” love or “false.” Here a sensation of “depth” appears hidden in the very word “love,” which promotes a further research of what “real” love is. The problem here does not lay in love, whatever love is, it lies in the bewitchment that make us to think that an essence of love exists. The problem here is that one thinks that all words are names, like “rat” or “bottle”; therefore, one looks for a corresponding “mental” or “psychic” object: “A main cause of philosophical diseases—a one-sided diet: one nourishes one’s thinking with only one kind of example” (§ 593). Take the following famous example, the duck–rabbit figure. From one perspective, it is a duck, but on another, it is a rabbit.



Two friends are looking at a psychology text book. One asks the other: “What is it this animal here?” “A duck,” the friend replies with absolute confidence. That means that she is certain that the image only represents a duck. Take notice of this particular language-game, because it introduces the therapeutic use of language. “Are you really sure that’s a duck?” the friend presses the other, “Don’t you see that it is quite a strange duck?” When one begins speaking, one assumes just one aspect of what one is speaking. Here there is the necessity of another body, that is, another point of view. Suddenly she sees a rabbit, and the duck fades away: “Wait!” she says to her friend, “It’s not a duck, it is a rabbit.” It is not so important what the exact stimulus that prompted the shift is; what is worth noticing, however, is that in a therapeutic philosophical language-game there is another voice that represents

other aspects of the situation. Therefore, according to Wittgenstein, there are two ways of doing philosophy (they are two aspects of this kind of activity): that which is trapped in language, when one uses language without even noticing its use, and that which is aimed to make it explicit that it is *language* that one is actually using. The philosophical problem arises when one is not aware that the deep problems one sets out to tackle are side-effects of the language used to think of them:

[W]hen we are worried about the nature of thinking, the puzzlement which we wrongly interpret to be one about the nature of a medium is a puzzlement caused by the mystifying use of our language. This kind of mistake recurs again and again in philosophy; e.g. when we are puzzled about the nature of time, when time seems to us a *queer thing*. We are most strongly tempted to think that here are things hidden, something we can see from the outside but which we can't look into. And yet nothing of the sort is the case. It is not new facts about time which we want to know. All the facts that concern us lie open before us. But it is the use of the substantive "time" which mystifies us. If we look into the grammar of that word, we shall feel that it is no less astounding that man should have conceived of a deity of time than it would be to conceive of a deity of negation or disjunction. (Wittgenstein 1969, p. 6)

On the contrary, philosophy as a therapy begins when another voice arrives which helps us to see the plurality of aspects we were blind to. As Aristotle knew (*Metaphysics*, 982b–983a) philosophy begins with wonder: "What is strange is really the surprise; the question "How is it possible!" It might be expressed by: "The *same*—and *yet* not the same" (Wittgenstein 1982, § 174). On the one hand, there is one aspect which pops up; on the other hand, another aspect which pops out. The philosophical sickness is the inability to see these two aspects as two forms of just a single object. What is really difficult to bear is the "change of aspects":

A picture story. In one of the pictures there are ducks, in another rabbits; but one of the duck heads is drawn exactly like one of the rabbit heads. Someone looks at the pictures, but he doesn't notice this. When he describes them he describes this shape first as the one, then as the other, without any hesitation. Only after we have shown him that the shapes are identical is he amazed (§ 165).

So he saw both aspects, but not the change of aspect (§ 166).

Our usual "one-sided diet" of language makes us to think that there is just a single object behind each name; this is the origin of the "philosophical diseases." A cure is only possible when another voice is listened to—whatever its origins—that helps us see that "the shapes are identical."

Philosophers very often talk about investigating, analysing, the meaning of words. But let's not forget that a word hasn't got a meaning given to it, as it were, by a power independent of us, so that there could be a kind of scientific investigation into what the word really means. A word has the meaning someone has given to it. (Wittgenstein 1969, p. 28)

This is the therapeutic aspect of philosophy: to make explicit that "a word has the meaning" it has because "someone has given" it "to it." That is, to restore the very distinction between who speaks and who is spoken to. At the very foundation of language there is the human body. Language sickness begins when one forgets this basic human fact, and one takes language as a self-sufficient entity. The two aspects of philosophy are connected to two possible stances one can assume in respect to

language: in one case one thinks and speaks but the very fact of speaking remains implicit; in the other case one thinks and speaks but the very fact of speaking is plainly explicit.

This distinction has obvious ethical consequences: in the first case, what one thinks and does is largely determined by what language implicitly offers as matter of thinking and action. In this case, one simply believes to be responsible for one’s actions, while in fact it is the impersonal language which thinks and acts through the speaker: “By accepting a proposition as self-evident, we also release it from all responsibility in face of experience” (Wittgenstein 1978, p. 239). This is exactly the ethical point: our responsibility “in face of experience.” In the other case one takes into account that there is language between oneself and what one wants to do; that is, here one takes responsibility for the language one is using. At this point the similarity between (the therapeutic aspect of) philosophy and psychoanalysis shows itself. Both language-games aim to improve the explicitness of language use: “Being psychoanalyzed is in a way like eating from the tree of knowledge. The knowledge we acquire sets us (new) ethical problems, but contributes nothing to their solution” (Wittgenstein 1998, p. 40). The “new ethical problems” are those problems which require that one choose one’s own course of action; that is, the aim of therapeutic philosophy and psychoanalysis is to partially (partially because the sickness is caused by language, but the therapy is linguistic too) free the body from language:

If certain graphic propositions for instance are laid down *for human beings* as dogmas governing thinking, namely in such a way that opinions are not thereby determined, but the *expression* of opinions is completely controlled, this will have a very strange effect. People will live under an absolute, palpable tyranny, yet without being able to say they are not free. I think the Catholic Church does something like this. For dogma is expressed in the form of an assertion & is unshakable, & at the same time any practical opinion can be made to accord with it; admittedly this is easier in some cases, more difficult in others. It is not a wall setting limits to belief, but like a brake which in practice however serves the same purpose; almost as though someone attached a weight to your foot to limit your freedom of movement. This is how dogma becomes irrefutable & beyond the reach of attack. (p. 32)

## 5 The Map of Language

Psychoanalysis is a “*talking cure*” (Breuer and Freud 1991), that is, a therapeutic method which is *only* based on language. The very idea of psychoanalysis is that it is language that really matters between the analyst and the analysand. Despite the common (and cinematographic) vision of psychoanalysis, which stresses the importance of interpretation, as if it was the focal point of such a method, what actually happens during a psychoanalytical session is a more or less extensive analysis of what the analysand has said. That is, the actual therapeutic work is the difficult research of a way to unravel the intricate and complicated ways words connect each other. For example, when the analyst says something about a analysand’s dream (incidentally, a situation that in strict Freudian analysis is quite rare), she is not really

speaking about the presumed internal content of such a dream; what she is really doing is to show to the analysand the connection between what he says to what he said in another occasion. That is, she is tracing previously unnoticed connections between words:

Compare the different parts of speech in a sentence with lines on a map with different functions (frontiers, roads, meridians, contours.) An uninstructed person sees a mass of lines and does not know the variety of their meanings. (Wittgenstein 1974, p. 58)

This is a very precise description of psychoanalysis (even if it is more suitable to Lacanian analysis; Benvenuto 2006; Cimatti 2013b). The analysand is the “uninstructed person,” who is not able to use the map of the town she lives in; therefore, she really does not know her own town. This means that her displacements are limited to the very few roads and squares she frequents often. But on the roads and squares that she does not know there are people, museums, pools, theatres, cinemas, shops, and much more, which would allow experiences and possibilities that she cannot even imagine. Her ignorance about her own town not only strongly limits her displacements, it limits the development of her own life. What the analyst does is to illustrate to the “uninstructed person” how to use the map of the town, that is, how to use language in a competent manner, because “the different parts of speech in a sentence” correspond to “lines on a map with different functions (frontiers, roads, meridians, and contours).” The analyst does not explain to the analysand what she “really” said (as if she was an expert of the so-called unconscious), what the analyst *actually* does is to show her how she could move in the town, that is, in language. The basic idea of such a comparison is that to know a language means being able to perform certain actions, which would not be possible without such a language: “Think of the tools in a toolbox: there is a hammer, pliers, a saw, a screwdriver, a rule, a glue-pot, glue, nails and screws—The functions of words are as diverse as the functions of these objects. (And in both cases there are similarities)” (Wittgenstein 1953, § 11). If the analyzed language is circumscribed to only a few kinds of words and sentences, the analysand’s capacity to formulate thoughts will be limited. Therefore, her imagination will be limited too, because there is no imagination which is not accompanied by the thought of what it is being imagined (Krebs 2010).

But what does it really mean to know a town? One can be said to have good knowledge of a town when one is able to go from any point in the town to any other point in it. That is, one knows a town when one has a somewhat general idea of how to move in the town, independent of the originating point. On the other hand, and this is a competency that has the same or perhaps greater value than the first one (Posnock 2010), one knows a town when one is not afraid to get lost in it, or one is able to wander without any particular goal. To know a town means that one confidently moves around in it. When we now consider language, such a double competency is condensed in what Wittgenstein calls “surveyable representation” (*übersichtliche Darstellung*) (Wittgenstein 1953, § 122). Take the case of someone who is speculating on the “true” meaning of a word, for example, “philosophy.” If one reflects on such a word taken in isolation, it is probable that one will produce a huge mass of nonsense speculations that have little or nothing to do with how such a

word is actually used by human beings (this is the metaphysical mistake). The mistake here consists in isolating the word from its actual use, as if it is overshadowed by its “true” meaning. That is, in order to understand the word “philosophy,” one does not need to transcend language to contemplate the word from outside:

One might think: if philosophy speaks of the use of the word “philosophy”, there must be a second-order philosophy. But that’s not the way it is; it is, rather, like the case of orthography, which deals with the word “orthography” among others without then being second-order (§ 121).

Since the meaning of “philosophy” (like any other word) is to be found in its use and connections with other words, if one really wants to understand it one must remain into the usual language. That is, to explain a word, one does not have to leave the language which is the only place the word has meaning: “Every sign *by itself* seems dead. *What* gives it life?—In use it *lives*. Is it there that it has living breath within it?—Or is the *use* its breath?” (§ 432). One can be said to know the meaning of the word “philosophy” when one is able to use it in a variety of contexts. Therefore, the only way out of the metaphysical mistake is trying to connect the word with the rest of language it is part of. When one sees the word together with the multiple and variable connections it has with the rest of language (its “living breath”), then one can be said to have attained a good competency:

A main source of our failure to understand is that we don’t have an *overview* of the use of our words.—Our grammar is deficient in surveyability. A surveyable representation produces precisely that kind of understanding which consists in ‘seeing connections’. Hence the importance of finding and inventing *intermediate links* (§ 122).

A “surveyable representation” of our language is exactly what the therapeutic philosophy provides us. Take the case of an analysand who tells a dream to his analyst. A dream—from the analyst’s point of view—consists in a series of sentences. Now, what the analyst *actually* does is to connect these words to other words the analysand used in the past, or to other words that one could use in that situation. That is, the analyst encourages the analysand in unexpected ways to see new *aspects* of what he said. It is important to note that it is neither an explanation nor an interpretation, rather is a “surveyable representation.” It is like when one gets lost in an unknown city; in order to get an idea of where one is, one needs a map of the city through which one can *see* the entire net of the town roads (today we would say that what one needs is an Internet connection to Google Maps). What is worth remembering is that such a “surveyable representation” is a representation which situates itself at the same level of what it represents. That is, the analyst and analysand place themselves at the same level; they share a common language. This is a very important point, if we remember the ethical stance that Wittgenstein attributed to the therapeutic work of philosophy: “Philosophy [as a therapy], as we use the word, is a fight against the fascination which forms of expression exert upon us” (Wittgenstein 1969, p. 27).

Take the following proposition of *Philosophical Investigations* as an example of Wittgenstein’s effective philosophical and therapeutic method (Ammereller and Fisher 2004):

“Still, it isn’t a game at all, if there is some vagueness *in the rules*.” But is it really not a game, then?—“Well, perhaps you’ll call it a game, but at any rate it isn’t a perfect game.” This means: then it has been contaminated, and what I am interested in now is what it was that was contaminated.—But I want to say: we misunderstand the role played by the ideal in our language. That is to say: we too would call it a game, only we are dazzled by the ideal, and therefore fail to see the actual application of the word “game” clearly. (Wittgenstein 1953, § 100)

At the beginning there is a statement which presents itself as if it was no longer emendable. It is not clear who asserts it. It seems to be a mathematical assertion, something like a theorem or an axiom. That’s the usual way the metaphysical or philosophical disease shows itself, as if it is a voice from nowhere, absolute and outside time. Immediately after, a second character, the voice of the other aspect of philosophy—the therapeutic one—introduces a doubt, that is, another point of view, another aspect. After this initial exchange which presents the two different perspectives, there is first a clarification of what the two voices—the metaphysician (analysand) and the philosopher (analyst)—are discussing: “the role played by the ideal in our language.” At this point there is what could be called the conclusion of this brief discussion. In fact, it is not a conclusion; clarity is provided about what it was that hampered our ability to understand the nature of games in a more comprehensive way. Now the metaphysician sees one aspect of what he does not know to believe about the games that prevented him to form a correct representation of the use of the word “game.” This procedure is very similar to what happens in actual psychotherapy, as one can see in this fragment of a real psychotherapeutic session, where it is apparent that “one of the specific characteristics of therapy is that both patient and therapist are presumably working towards making certain propositions explicit” (Labov and Fanshel 1977, p. 53).

Wife: *Why do I think he’s talking this way? .... Well, listen to how many instances—we stopped at a fruit stand Saturday night—*

Therapist: [interruption] *I almost prefer not to hear this...*

Wife: *Oh? Not to hear it?*

Therapist: *Because the instance will be another instance.*

Wife: *Because whenever.... all right, whenever I do something, whether it’s right or wrong, it’s always wrong in his eyes.*

Therapist: *Okay. So that’s one reason (ibid).*

In this excerpt, the therapist prefers not to follow the endless and repetitive series of examples the analysand is reporting, which prevent her from seeing the whole situation in which she is entrapped. At the same time the therapist is not exactly explaining the analysand’s behavior, what he is looking for is a way to make explicit what all her plaintive examples implicitly hide: that whatever she does, she considers all her actions somewhat wrong (it is not important that she attributes this feeling to her husband): “the therapist [is] making [...] a strenuous effort to extract and make explicit the general propositions that are implicit in the anecdotes and examples given by the patient” (ibid.). This is what Wittgenstein thinks is the purpose of therapeutic philosophy:

Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts.

Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity.

A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations.

Philosophy does not result in ‘philosophical propositions’, but rather in the clarification of propositions.

Without philosophy thoughts are, as it were, cloudy and indistinct: its task is to make them clear and to give them sharp boundaries. (Wittgenstein 2002, § 4.112)

As long as the thoughts are “cloudy and indistinct,” a responsible action is impossible. In this sense, ethics is placed at the end of this kind of endless therapy (because the map of language is at best a partial approximation only of actual language). Is there any difference between this kind of philosophical therapy and psychoanalysis? If psychoanalysis is really a “talking cure” (it is not clear how many psychoanalysts would still agree with such a definition), and if philosophy is indeed what Wittgenstein thought it was (it is certain that today there are very few philosophers which would accept his ideas, if any; Tripodi 2009), then the impression is that there are no significant differences between these two activities (Crittenden 1970; Peterman 1992; Cavell 1993; Ellenbogen 2006; Burton 2011). This is particularly evident in respect to psychoanalysis: the quite astonishing fact that very different meta-psychological theories, based on completely different assumptions on the human psyche and development, could equally be efficacious (or inefficacious), seems to confirm that it is not such theories which make those different psychoanalytic approaches beneficial, but the simple fact that there are *verbal* therapies. The predominance of the verbal aspect in both psychoanalysis and what Wittgenstein thought is philosophy, should make the similarities between them even more evident.

The ethical point is that when a “surveyable representation” is finally provided, even if there is no such a thing as a ultimate representation of language, then a new and a completely unexpected possibility of movement appears: “Someone is *imprisoned* in a room if the door is unlocked, opens inwards; but it doesn’t occur to him to *pull*, rather than push against it” (Wittgenstein 1998, p. 48). Philosophy, like psychoanalysis, makes explicit what the prisoner underwent implicitly. The door was not locked, but it opens by pulling instead of pushing. When she finally realizes that no obstacle prevents her from leaving the room, then a new possibility of action presents itself to her: she does not know what is right to do—it is not a philosophical duty to establish what is right and what is wrong—but now she knows that a decision is waiting for her. Ethics begin (and partially finishes too) when a decision is made. A decision is made possible by the fact that the prisoner changed the aspect under which she saw the space she was imprisoned in: when she begins to see it not as a prison but as room. A room can be exited at any moment, while this is not possible in a prison cell.

There is a last point to analyze: what kind of body it is that passes through the philosophical therapy. Because it could seem that the kind of strange ethics Wittgenstein is proposing is quite cerebral and abstract. This is a deep misunderstanding. At the bottom of language there is the human form of life, there are “general facts of nature” (Wittgenstein 1953, § 142). The point is that the body who begins participating in philosophical therapy (or psychoanalysis; Cimatti 2013b) is not exactly the same body who passed through it (Krebs 2010). Such a “new” body has expanded its possibility of actions because now it “knows” the map of language;



therefore, it can move in all directions. For this reason, “The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man” (Wittgenstein 2002, § 6.43): the “unhappy man” is unhappy just because he is strongly limited in his movements, like the prisoner in the room who does not know how not to be in a prison cell. What the “happy” man has acquired is the ability to freely wander into the whole city, that is, the ability to use all forms of language. But it finally means that now the body has partially become just one thing with the city, because no place exists that it does not know: “In order to live happily I must be in agreement with the world. And that is what ‘being happy’ *means*” (Wittgenstein 1979, p. 75). It is this final coincidence that the body, having passed through the philosophical therapy, aims to achieve: to be “in agreement with the world;” and there is no better agreement than to directly become world: a body that does not need to know the map of the city, because now it *is* the city. At the very end of this difficult and complicated route there is no reason or self-awareness, there is the instinct:

It could very well be imagined that someone knows his way around a city perfectly, i.e. would confidently find the shortest way from any place in it to any other,—and yet would be quite incompetent to draw a map of the city. That, as soon as he tries, he produces nothing that is not completely wrong. (Our concept of ‘instinct’). (Wittgenstein 1981, § 121)

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# The Individual and the Social Path of Interpretation: The Case of Incomplete Disjunctive Questions

Kasia M. Jaszczolt, Eleni Savva and Michael Haugh

**Abstract** Subsentential utterances provide an ideal testing ground for issues central to the topic of the syntax–pragmatics interface such as the exact nature of the interaction between the information derivable from the structure and information obtained through pragmatic inference or default (automatic) pragmatic adjustments of meaning. Our case study for the purpose of this chapter is incomplete disjunction of the form ‘*p* or ...’, in particular in interrogative constructions, with the second disjunct missing—unpronounced or, in some cases, even ‘unthought’ as our analysis of the corpus data shows. The chapter offers an attempt at a formal treatment, using the theoretical framework of default semantics (DS), of the compositional representation of such expressions, accounting for the sources of information, the processes involved in the recovery of the intended meaning, as well as allowing some preliminary insight into their interaction. It makes use of the database of incomplete disjunctive interrogatives in English compiled out of the Great British component of the International Corpus of English, supplemented with examples taken from the Australian National Corpus and thereby offers theoretically motivated explanations for the pragmatic effects that incomplete disjunctive interrogatives have been observed to occasion in naturally occurring interactions. The category of disjunction is semantically and pragmatically complex: It can communicate, among others, that (i) the addressee is *given a choice* out of a set of alternatives (ii) the addressee has to *think* of possible alternatives, (iii) the speaker lacks information to make a stronger claim, and (iv) it would not be correct to make an informatively stronger assertion because two or more states of affairs are (equally) plausible. In Sect. 2, we point out the variety of functions that *or* can adopt. In Sect. 3, we introduce the theoretical problem with incomplete disjunction, and in Sect. 4, we move to the discussion of the semantics and pragmatics of incomplete utterances, focusing on contextualist pragmatic vis-à-vis syntactic ellipsis accounts. Section 5 offers a DS-theoretic analysis of the sources of information about completions and the associated processes that produce the truth-conditional representation. Section 6 lays out

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theoretical foundations for the mechanism of establishing relevant alternatives by proposing an extension to alternative semantics. Section 7 follows with the presentation of the merger representations for selected examples from the corpus, pertaining to different categories of ‘or...?’ constructions we previously identified.

**Keywords** Default semantics · Societal pragmatics · Inferential pragmatics · Disjunction

## 1 Rationale and Objectives

Incomplete utterances are in vogue in pragmatics (e.g. Stainton 2006), just as sentence fragments are in vogue in syntax and semantics (e.g. Merchant 2004) and in modelling dialogue (e.g. Ginzburg 2012; Gregoromichelaki and Kempson [this volume](#)). There are good reasons for this fact. It has been long acknowledged that a theory of meaning that adopts the sentence as its basic unit of analysis is too restrictive as it misses the opportunity to explore the properties of anaphoric dependencies, quantifier scope, and other essential phenomena that are best pursued on the level of discourse. The rise of dynamic semantic approaches and the progressing ‘pragmatization’ of semantics best testify to this need for including context and co-text in any considerations of meaning, to mention only discourse representation theory (DRT; Kamp and Reyle 1993) as an example of the first, and contextualism in truth-conditional accounts such as truth-conditional pragmatics (Recanati 2004, 2010) and default semantics (DS; Jaszczolt 2005, 2010) as examples of the other. Incomplete utterances provide a unique opportunity to test the interaction between those aspects of meaning that come from the structure of the sentence and those that are added freely, irrespective of this structure, to the overall representation. In this context, one way to proceed is to opt for the interaction of the linguistic and fundamentally nonlinguistic content in forming the propositional representation, where the nonlinguistic content is, by definition, not derived from the structure and, in addition, not even “‘translated into’ natural language format” (Stainton 2006, p. 156) before entering this representation. Another way is to adopt the syntactic direction and try to demonstrate that fragmentary utterances are derived from syntactic structures that are fully sentential whenever they correspond to a determinate proposition (Merchant 2004). In the latter case, standard elided constituents such as the verb phrase (VP) ‘do it’ are employed. The latter strategy, discussed in more detail in Sect. 4, leaves behind a vast array of fragmentary utterances and hence is of a limited applicability but will be considered for our case at hand, namely incomplete disjunction, as a possible solution for one of the subcategories of incompleteness.

In short, subsentential utterances provide an ideal testing ground for an unprejudiced analysis of the extent to which the sentence should be the centre of attention in the analyses of meaning. As such, they also provide an ideal testing ground for issues central to the topic of the syntax–pragmatics interface such as the exact nature of the interaction between the information derivable from the structure and information obtained through pragmatic inference or default (automatic) pragmatic adjustments of meaning. Moreover, what is of central importance for the topic of

this volume, they provide excellent material for assessing individual intentions and inferences vis-à-vis those aspects of meaning that arise from the shared sociocultural background and, as such, are either attributed automatically or inferred from common ground. In this context, we are further developing Jacob Mey's (2001, 2007) idea of speech acts as *situated practices*<sup>1</sup> that should be analysed within the context of (i) the situation and (ii) the language in which they are uttered. Such situated pragmatic acts provide suitable material for further formal analysis of utterance meaning. Using a contextualist approach to truth-conditional representation and the contextualist, interaction-driven approach to the compositionality of meaning, we can provide conceptual representations of subsentential speech in terms of complete underlying propositions, attending to the method of combination of information that comes from different aspects of the situation of discourse (SD). We devote Sect. 5 to this theoretically important issue of sources of information and processes that contribute to the representation of utterance meaning.

Our case study for the purpose of this chapter is incomplete disjunction of the form '*p* or ...', in particular in interrogative constructions, with the second disjunct missing—unpronounced or, in some cases, even 'unthought' as our analysis of the corpus data (Sect. 2) will show.<sup>2</sup> It builds on Haugh's (2011) analysis both in terms of the object of study and in terms of the contextualist, default-based analysis of possible completions. But it takes the topic much further in both directions in that (i) it offers a first attempt at a formal treatment, using the theoretical framework of DS, of the compositional representation of such expressions, accounting for the sources of information, the processes involved in the recovery of the intended meaning, as well as allowing some preliminary insight into their interaction; (ii) it makes use of the database of incomplete disjunctive interrogatives in British English compiled out of the Great British component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-GB) by one of the authors (Savva), supplemented with examples taken from the Australian component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-AUS) and the Griffith Corpus of Spoken Australian English (GCSAusE), both of which are accessible through the Australian National Corpus<sup>3</sup> (Haugh); and (iii) it thereby offers theoretically motivated explanations for the pragmatic effects that incomplete disjunctive interrogatives have been observed to occasion in naturally occurring interactions.

Disjunction is a particularly apt category to study in that, on the one hand, the structure of disjunctive utterances with the utterance-final connective is very straightforward. We have the standard logical form  $p \vee q$  that, in the case of fragments, before any pragmatic modification, is fragmentary in a predictable way:  $p \vee ?$ <sup>4</sup>. On the other

<sup>1</sup> Whose formal equivalent is called by Mey a *pragmeme* (Mey 2001).

<sup>2</sup> We are aware that terms such as 'unsaid', 'unuttered', and 'unpronounced' all come with some theoretical baggage. Unless we refer to an extant source outside this chapter, we settle on the term 'unpronounced', leaving the nuances to be discussed in separate work. The term 'unpronounced' allows us to stay away from the discussions surrounding the scope of 'what is said' and the sense of 'unarticulated'—both in the focus of cutting-edge debates but tangential to the current project in which the composition of meaning is understood in terms of merger representations.

<sup>3</sup> [www.ausnc.org.au](http://www.ausnc.org.au)

<sup>4</sup> We will ignore for the moment the instances of natural-language disjunction with more than two disjuncts ( $p$  or  $q$  or  $r$ ...) and the fact that a lot of the instances of incomplete disjunction are non-declaratives (mostly questions: ' $p$  or ...?', see also Haugh 2011).

hand, the category of disjunction is in itself semantically and pragmatically complex: It can communicate, among others, that (i) the addressee is *given a choice* out of a set of alternatives, (ii) the addressee has to *think* of possible alternatives, (iii) the speaker lacks information to make a stronger claim, (iv) it would not be correct to make an informatively stronger assertion because two or more states of affairs are (equally) plausible. The range of meanings that disjunction can communicate, either explicitly or implicitly, gave rise to radically different accounts in the literature. We make use of them in Sect. 2 before embarking on the project of offering a comprehensive model in which we identify the sources of information about the meaning of the missing disjunct and, ultimately, offer a proposal of a contextualist truth-conditional representation of incomplete disjunction (Sect. 5–7).

All in all, we take incomplete disjunctive utterances, and in particular disjunctive interrogatives, on board as a testing ground for the DS-theoretic proposal of the interaction between linguistic, individual inferential, and sociocultural shared factors in utterance interpretation, aiming at a principled, compositional, and eventually formal representation of their discourse meaning. The structure of the chapter is as follows. Section 2 introduces some points of pragmatic interest of disjunctive constructions. We also try there to establish some order within the uses of disjunctive interrogative connectives, pointing out the variety of functions that *or* can adopt. In Sect. 3, we introduce the problem of incomplete disjunction, and in Sect. 4, we move to the theoretical discussion of the semantics and pragmatics of incomplete utterances, focusing on contextualist pragmatic vis-à-vis syntactic ellipsis accounts. Section 5 offers a DS-theoretic analysis of the sources of information about completions and the associated processes that produce the truth-conditional representation. Section 6 lays out some theoretical foundations for the mechanism of establishing relevant alternatives by proposing an extension to alternative semantics. Section 7 follows with the presentation of the merger representations for selected examples from the corpus, pertaining to different categories of ‘or...?’ constructions we previously identified. Section 8 concludes and offers some suggestions for a future extension of this method of analysis.

## 2 Some Pragmatic Properties of Disjunction: Towards a Discourse-Driven Typology

The Gricean line of analysis of *or* focuses on the implicatures associated with its use, such as scalar implicatures to the effect that both disjuncts are not the case (*p or q* and *not (p and q)*; i.e. exclusivity implicature), implicatures to the effect that the speaker is unable to be more precise and communicate one of the propositions as true (i.e. uncertainty implicature), as well as the possibility of implicating a choice between *p* and *q* (i.e. free choice implicature; see Grice 1978/1989; Horn 1972; Levinson 2000; Geurts 2010; Haugh 2011 on the discussion of some or all of these types).

In the case of *incomplete disjunctive statements*, the status of  $q$  varies. By saying ‘ $p$  or...’, the speaker may intend to indicate that the alternative ( $q$ ) is (i) salient in his/her mind but best left unuttered because (i.a) it can easily be inferred, or because (i.b) it would be potentially face-threatening to utter it. Alternatively, (ii) the speaker may intend to indicate that he/she has no clear alternative in mind. Here, the utterance can convey (ii.a) a complete open-endedness of the possibilities of completion, even going beyond the usual constraints of common ground or (ii.b) that ‘or’ does not play its customary role of disjunction but instead is used as a discourse marker, signalling hesitation, or what relevance theorists dub a *higher-level explicature* (e.g. Wilson and Sperber 1993): an attitude to the expressed proposition such as uncertainty as to whether this was the correct way to phrase the assertion, whether it was appropriate to raise in that context, and so forth. Next, given that in the case of option (i), the speaker evidently has in mind a distinct set of alternatives, such examples also interact with the ( $\alpha$ ) polar (‘or not’) versus ( $\beta$ ) nonpolar (or what we can call a ‘local alternative’) distinction, and within ( $\beta$ ), and sometimes also in ( $\alpha$ ), the ( $\alpha/\beta.1$ ) exclusive versus ( $\alpha/\beta.2$ ) inclusive distinction. In addition, ( $\beta$ ) can be instantiated as ( $\beta'$ ), a local closed set of alternatives, or as ( $\beta''$ ), a local open set.<sup>5</sup> Both ( $\beta'$ ) and ( $\beta''$ ) permit exclusive and inclusive interpretation. Category (i.a. $\alpha.1$ ) is exemplified in (1) below, where the completion that can be inferred is ‘or not’:

(1) Sometimes they just, I don't know,[assume] it's the in thing to do or...

ICE-AUS: S1A-025 187<sup>6</sup> (two sisters are talking about how sometimes celebrities end up becoming drug addicts or alcoholics).

Extract (2) exemplifies, in the given context, category (i.b. $\beta'.2$ ):

(2) No no it's it's Hawthorn and, Hawthorn and Fitzroy or or...

ICE-AUS: S1A-066 161 (four family members are talking about a game of AFL the father is going to watch that Friday night)

In (2), the potential threat arises from the speaker correcting the son's prior assumption about who will be playing; yet, the father nevertheless plays down the fact that he appears to know better than the son about the discussed situation. Examples of (ii.a) and (ii.b) are given in (3) and (4), respectively. In (3), the options are ostensibly endless and undecided on by the speaker. In (4), the speaker does not know what else the cheese might be called and is focusing on expressing the lack of certainty—an epistemic attitude:

(3) Yeah I'm not sure though. I dunno. I dunno if I wanna go or...

ICE-AUS: S1A-089 408 (three friends are talking about where to go on holiday in light of an invitation from another friend to go to the Whitsundays)

(4) pasta and like boccocini, I think it's boccocini or...

<sup>5</sup> Not to be confused with the category (ii.a).

<sup>6</sup> The tagging used throughout the chapter refers to the corpora stated in the prefix (ICE-AUS, GCSAus, ICE-GB). For example, in (1), S1A-025 is an identifier of the conversation and 187 refers to the line number in the transcript. Where there is no such indexing of examples, examples are either created for explanatory purposes or their source is acknowledged.



GCSAus: E04 191 (two friends are talking about things they like cooking).

This topography suffices to produce a fairly finely grained typology of uses of disjunctive statements. We will move now to incomplete disjunctive questions.

Using principally analogous classificatory principles for *incomplete disjunctive interrogatives*, we subcategorise them into (i) those that aim at eliciting an answer (they function as genuine or information-seeking questions) and (ii) those that do not, but rather involve instances of so-called indirect speech acts where a request or suggestion is achieved through a question, and so on. Beginning with (ii), we can distinguish the cases where (ii.a) ‘or’ functions as a, so to speak, general-purpose discourse marker in that no completions are intended, for example in the case of polite requests; (ii.b) ‘or’ is used to hedge (ii.b') the propositional content of the disjunct uttered, or (ii.b'') the illocutionary force associated with using it. Finally, there is also the case of (ii.c) a straightforward incomplete disjunction, aiming at joining two speech acts where the second one may be easily recoverable. Category (ii.c) allows for both (ii.c') exclusive and (ii.c'') inclusive use. Sentence (5) is an example of (ii.a), where ‘or’ functions as what we will for now tentatively call a ‘general-purpose’ discourse marker in that its function as a sentential connective is largely bleached.<sup>7</sup> Category (ii.b') is exemplified in (6). The speaker issues a suggestion but hedges the potential for truth of the proposition embedded under the illocutionary force. Instances of (ii.b') are uncommon but are included here for the sake of completeness. In (7), ‘or’ carries the function of distancing the speaker from his/her expressed illocutionary force (ii.b''). Example (8) pertains to the category (ii.c'), with an elided second occurrence of the conventional request formula. Next, (9) exemplifies (ii.c''). It is clear from the juxtaposition of these examples that often they can only be differentiated through the recovery of the speaker’s intention:

- (5) Would you mind moving your car a bit or... [I am hereby being polite.]
- (6) Shall we meet in Grantchester at the railway station or...[perhaps Grantchester doesn’t have a railway station]
- (7) Could you go and fetch some wood for the fire or...[in fact I will go and do it]
- (8) Could you please arrive on time or...[perhaps warn me if you are going to be late?] (when clearly intended as exclusive: giving an alternative whereby the speaker is permitted to be late)
- (9) Could you try eating less wheat or...[take more exercise] (when clearly intended as inclusive, say, in the context of medical advice)

Moving to questions proper (category (i)), these can be further divided into (i.a) polar and (i.b) local, where local can be either (i.b') communicating a closed set or (i.b'') communicating an open set.<sup>8</sup> The difference between (i.b') and (i.b'') can be inferred or automatically obtained from what is known/assumed—both with reference to extralinguistic information and to the properties of the words and structures, as in the case of entailment. Finally, all three permit exclusive and inclusive

<sup>7</sup> This is an important issue concerning the behaviour of connectives but we cannot tackle it here in more depth. Compare also the discourse use of a single-word utterance ‘And?’

<sup>8</sup> Interrogatives in category (ii) can be argued to display the closed/open set as well, but since they do so in virtue of the juxtaposition of different speech acts, this is almost impossible to include in the typology.

interpretation. For the purpose of discussing this category, we will be using examples from our database compiled out of ICE-GB. The database for incomplete disjunction consists of 55 instances of the type ‘*p* or ...’. Of these, the majority are interrogatives (65.45% interrogatives, 23.6% non-interrogatives, and 11% unintentionally incomplete, i.e. the speaker was interrupted).<sup>9</sup>

The three categories distinguished above, that is (i.a), (i.b'), and (i.b''), are exemplified by extracts from our database in (10)–(12), respectively. We shall not descend to the exclusive/inclusive distinction for this purpose of the classification:

(10) Is that sort of official or...?

ICE-GB: S1A-071 105 (casual conversation about room rental)

(11) Would it be typed documents or...?

ICE-GB: S1A-024 045 (talking about a corpus of texts)

(12) Uh from the solo you mean or...?

ICE-GB: S1A-021 081(rehearsing a song)

In (10), the polarity (as well as the exclusive reading) is signalled by the semantic properties and discourse distribution of the adjective ‘official’ whose polar alternative ‘not official’ is much more accessible than any potential local alternatives such as, for instance, ‘oral agreement’, ‘written down but unofficial’, ‘not official but witnessed’, and so forth. But, at the same time, hedging in the answer (in 10') reveals that a polar question does not have to receive a polar answer:

(10') D: Like it's his own bed-sit and he rents out three bedrooms

A: It's shared but... Oh right.

B: Is that sort of official or...?

A: No.

D: Well no

B: I don't know how it works

A: But a lot of people do that sort of thing you know.

ICE-GB: S1A-071 105

On the other hand, while the phrase ‘typed documents’ in (11) invites local alternatives such as ‘handwritten notes’, ‘recordings’, ‘electronic file’, etc., example (12) can be fairly uncontroversially classified as an open-ended disjunctive question in that the range of options as to from which point exactly the person should resume singing is very extensive; almost anywhere in the score (the answer in the corpus was: ‘I'm second line down’).

In practice, open-endedness will have to be qualified. It will mean a range of alternatives, some of which can be unpredictable or not thought of, but held together by the common purpose at hand, background information, sociocultural or group norms, and other factors pertaining to the situation. In (13), which is an extract from

<sup>9</sup> This breakdown is consistent with Koike's (2010) study of incomplete disjunction in the Switchboard Corpus, where 69% instances co-occurred with interrogatives, and 31% co-occurred with declaratives (although he provided no information on cases of incomplete disjunction arising through interruption).

a conversation between a student and a counsellor, open-endedness can only be inferred from the context when it is clear that the student has no idea of the length of time involved. In addition, time as intervals is not a commodity that yields itself to discrete alternatives:

- (13) A: Well, you might be lucky, but the reality is that you'd have to wait.  
 B: How long wait?  
 A: Well, that I couldn't say.  
 B: A year or...?  
 A: I really couldn't answer that.

ICE-GB: S1A-062 166

Finally, there are in-between cases such as (14). This is an extract from a dialogue between an insurance salesman and a student in which the intended set of alternatives is likely to be closed, in that the salesman is aware of all the insurance packages he has to offer, while at the same time knowing that the student may have a list of insurance-worthy items and insurance-worthy disasters in mind but not be aware that there are any choice restrictions. B's response is certainly compatible with this interpretation (albeit it does not exclude other scenarios such as for example a request for repetition on the grounds of not hearing rather than not understanding):

- (14) A: And did you want third party fire and theft or...?  
 B: Do I want what?  
 A: Third party fire and theft or party only.

ICE-GB: S1B-080 174

Moreover, the distinctions in category (ii) spill over to (i). Interrogatives that do aim at eliciting an answer can also involve incomplete disjunction where the purpose of the disjunct is (a) to hedge (a') the illocutionary force or (a'') the propositional content; or (b) to introduce another speech act with the resulting (b') exclusive or (b'') inclusive disjunction. Taking (10) as the starting point, this would give us for examples (10.a)–(10.b''):

- (10.a') Is that sort of official or...[perhaps I shouldn't have asked?]  
 (10.a'') Is that sort of official or...[perhaps 'being official' is not relevant in this situation?]  
 (10.b') Is that sort of official or...[do we have to register it somewhere?] (when clearly intended as exclusive)  
 (10.b'') Is that sort of official or...[is this in the contract?] (when clearly intended as inclusive)

Such readings, albeit feasible, are, however, so heavily context-driven and hard to recover that they do not seem to merit a place in the sub-classification of category (ii). It is expected that such general principles for building a typology can also help lay out general principles for classifying speech acts with other sentential connectives joining two propositions (conjunction and implication)—a task that we will have to forgo for the present.

Fragmentary utterances are relatively common in discourse and it is not difficult to list some informed speculative reasons for it. In the case of disjunction, one of the common factors is politeness which can arise in some cases of disjunctive interrogatives through 'adjusting the epistemic gradient' (Haugh 2011, p. 210), or through

relaxing the ‘exhaustivity presupposition for mentioned alternatives’ (Biezma and Rawlins 2012, p. 361). When the disjunction is open-ended, the speaker allows the addressee some freedom of choice concerning the types and the range of possible completions. When the possible completions come from a contextually delimited but closed set of propositions, it can still be more polite to offer, at least ostensibly, a choice. Finally, when the disjunction is intended as (and recovered as) polar, the speaker’s withdrawal from explicitly uttering the alternative (that is often potentially disagreeable, depreciative or otherwise controversial) is also a polite move, sometimes even face-saving for the addressee.<sup>10</sup> If we consider excerpts (10)–(12) more carefully, for instance, we can observe how these are all potentially open to interpretation as polite, although just how such evaluations of politeness might arise depends, in part, on what set of responses the participants themselves elect to treat as apt with respect to that particular disjunctive interrogative. With that proviso in mind, it appears that in the case of example (10), the speaker is attenuating through a trailing off ‘or’ what might be oriented to as a ‘delicacy’ by the other participants (Lerner 2013, p. 108), namely, the implication that the person they are talking about is engaged in some kind of inappropriate or even illegal activity in sub-letting the three bedrooms (consistent with reading 10.a). It is also likely that the speaker is indicating through the disjunctive interrogative the uncertainty as to whether it is appropriate to ask such a question, and the speaker subsequently explicitly orients to this as epistemic uncertainty (‘I don’t know how it works’). By treating what is left attenuated as a ‘delicacy’ and by this display of epistemic uncertainty, the speaker appears to be indicating a polite stance through leaving something ‘unsaid’ (Haugh 2015). In the case of example (11), the speaker is evidently displaying epistemic uncertainty, and so adjusts the epistemic gradient in favour of the hearer (Heritage and Raymond 2005, 2012). In displaying concern for the epistemic territory of the hearer, the speaker indicates a polite stance (Haugh 2011, p. 215). Finally, in the case of example (12), the disjunctive interrogative allows the speaker to indicate deontic uncertainty about proposing where they restart the song they are rehearsing, that is, a low entitlement to be determining where they should restart (Craven and Potter 2010; Stevanovic and Peräkylä 2012). In adjusting the ‘deontic gradient’ in favour of the hearer, the speaker thereby indicates a polite stance (Kádár and Haugh 2013; Haugh 2013).<sup>11</sup>

Other interpersonal factors in the use of disjunctive interrogatives are also likely to be at play alongside politeness, for example self-presentational work, but a detailed discussion of these lies outside the scope of this chapter. What is important to note here is that developing a formal account of the ‘choices’ offered to hearers

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<sup>10</sup> For the purpose of this discussion, we refrain from committing ourselves to a particular theory or model of linguistic politeness but this claim could be easily rephrased, for example, as attending to the addressee’s negative as well as positive face-needs in terms of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model. See Kádár and Haugh (2013) for further discussion of reasons for avoiding premature theorisation, particularly from a crosslinguistic perspective.

<sup>11</sup> This latter claim differs in a number of respects from Brown and Levinson’s (1987) claims about the importance of respecting the hearer’s autonomy, or what they termed ‘negative face’ (see Curl and Drew 2008 for further discussion).

through fragmentary utterances is critical if we are to adequately ground any empirical analysis of the pragmatic or interpersonal effects to which they evidently give rise. It is thus to the development of this account of fragmentary utterances that we now turn.

### 3 ‘Or...?’: The Importance of Sentence Fragments

Sentence fragments that do not obviously succumb to a syntactic treatment are of particular interest for semanticists in that they are a profitable testing ground for the semantics/pragmatics boundary disputes, involving arguments for and against minimalism, indexicalism, and contextualism. Subsuming these cases under the category of syntactic ellipsis does not seem to be satisfactory in that the exact structure of the missing part is not recoverable. On the other hand, analysing them entirely in terms of context-driven inferences entails a danger of missing some important generalizations. In Sect. 4, we attend to the question of the choice between a syntactic and a pragmatic treatment of such constructions in more detail. Suffice to say at present that open-endedness itself alludes to a range of conveyed aspects of meaning that could not possibly be captured on the basis of the considerations of the linguistic structure of the utterance—for the simple reason that there is no such structure to consider. However, excluding such cases from our account of meaning would seem unwarranted, given that they occur frequently in natural conversation and they seem to be perfectly meaningful. Moreover, once we go deeper into analysing empirical facts, we can discover some systematicity that would pass unnoticed if we were merely focusing on sentential utterances. In order to illustrate the complexity of insights one can draw from investigating incomplete utterances as used in context, we shall consider some more examples of incomplete disjunctive interrogatives. In (15) below, disjunction seems to play a metalinguistic role: Even though the question could only be a polar one, i.e. even though there are only two possible alternative answers, incomplete disjunction may still end up as local when the interrogator wants to avoid committing himself/herself to the assumption that there can be no other possible answers to the question. When constructing the question, the speaker is aware that the situation might be more complicated than a binary choice would allow:

(15) A: Is it a different car or the same car or ...?

B: Eh no a different car.

ICE-GB: S1B-080 013 (between insurance salesman and a student).

In other words, the insurance salesman asks a question that in theory could only be a polar one: The car in question could either be the same (presumably as the one mentioned earlier) or a different one. However, the salesman still goes on to perform an incomplete disjunction. In other words, what should have been a polar question is performed as an ostensibly local-open one, possibly due to face-saving concerns.

It is interesting to note that 17% of the interrogative cases in our dataset belong to a category that we could call ‘polar but potentially local’, in that, as we explain in more detail in Sect. 5, on one level of generalization their completion can only be polar ( $p$  or  $\neg p$  / ‘ $p$  or antonym of  $p$ ’), while on a different level of generalization the completion can be local, insofar as one starts to entertain more specific options included in the ‘ $\neg p$ /antonym of  $p$ ’ category. This is exemplified in (16)–(18) below:

(16) A: So you avoided art and things at school.

B: Yeah.

A: Because of this you mean or...?

B: No. Can’t abide art.

ICE-GB: S1A-051 283(At the doctor, talking about some condition that affected the patient’s activity).

(17) A: Is there anything on there I can take or...?

B: Anything that doesn’t say anything on it you can have.

ICE-GB: S1A-077 296(Student at the careers office).

(18) A: I’ve had the flu a few times actually this year.

B: Yeah. Do you feel a bit low? Are you running late nights working hard for exams or...?

A: Yeah. I’m<unclear>

ICE-GB: S1A-087 160(At the dentist).

In (16), the medical condition either *was* or *was not* the reason for which the patient avoided art at school ( $p$  or *not*  $p$ ). However, if one starts to entertain the options within ‘not  $p$ ’, there will be an endless list of possibilities, including the one stated in the answer. If we classify such questions on the basis of the answer they were given, we could call them ‘polar+elaboration’, insofar as they are given a ‘yes/no’ answer which also specifies the alternative to ‘ $p$ ’. In (17), it either is or is not the case that there is something the student can take. However, the open-endedness of the question could be taken as a request for a more elaborate response, such as the one that was given, i.e. not only an answer to whether there is anything she could take but also a specification of the exact items she could take. The answer is only indirectly positive in that the ‘yes’ is entailed by the specification of what exactly the student can take. In this sense, it can be classified as ‘polar+elaboration’. Finally, in (18), again, it either *is* or *is not* the case that the patient was running late nights, working hard for exams. However, within the ‘is not’ option there are many sub-possibilities: First, those that function as alternatives to the ‘running late nights’ part, such as the possibility that he was in fact going to bed early every day, and then alternatives to the ‘working hard for exams’ part, such as that he was in fact staying up late but because he was partying, or because his neighbours were noisy, etc. Regardless of the exact answer that was given in this case (which was not recoverable), it seems that, in general, incomplete disjunction not only leaves the completion open for the hearer to perform but also often leaves open the aspect of  $p$  that it seeks an alternative to. In the following section, we turn to the general question of incomplete utterances and evaluate some possible approaches one can adopt.

## 4 Fragmentary Utterances: Syntax or Pragmatics?

In this section, we turn to placing our case study in the wider picture of the semantics of subsentential utterances. The phenomenon of subsentential utterances that convey complete propositions is perhaps the most obvious manifestation of the mismatch between form and meaning often attested in language, whereby the use of an utterance in context communicates aspects of meaning that do not correspond to constituents overtly present in its structure. This mismatch is in its turn a manifestation of context dependency, in that where the meaning communicated is not solely recoverable from the utterance itself, it must be recoverable from the interaction of the latter with its context of use. The way we account for subsentential utterances thus will carry implications with regards to the interface between syntax and pragmatics, semantics and pragmatics, and as long as subsentential utterances are able to convey complete propositions, such an account would also carry implications with regards to the interface between language and thought.

We will begin by briefly considering the question whether all cases of fragmentary utterances can be subsumed under the umbrella of syntactic ellipsis, in that the choice of an approach towards subsentential speech we ultimately adopt will depend on the answer to this question (see also Elugardo and Stainton 2005, pp. 5–8). If the answer is positive, a syntactic approach would be plausible; if the answer is negative, it would appear that one has to rely on pragmatics. We will argue that the answer to the question is in fact negative, in that to adopt a syntactic account one would have to postulate speculative completions and/or exclude a wide range of sentence fragments from the analysis. A pragmatic approach to subsentential speech will be argued to be preferable as it is better equipped to capture empirical facts.

### 4.1 *One or Two Kinds of Ellipsis?*

Let us consider the following three examples of fragmentary utterances:

(19) A: When is Anna coming to Cambridge?

B: *Tomorrow* [Anna is coming to Cambridge].

(20) A person walks in while I talk to a friend. Both of us notice him. I utter to my friend: *'My brother'*.

(21) Two friends are playing scrabble. One of them places a word on the board. The other sees it, calculates for a few moments, and then grasps his pen and utters:

*'Twelve'*.

We should start by acknowledging some similarities between these cases. First, in all of them speakers seem to communicate more than they actually pronounce. Second, it seems that all of them convey a complete proposition and that a fully fledged speech act of assertion is performed in each case since, despite the syntactic incompleteness, an average speaker of English would be able to recover the intended meaning effortlessly. Finally, none of them is a case of speech error, insofar as there is nothing ill-formed or ungrammatical about them. However, there are

also substantial differences between them. First, in (19), regardless of the technical details about generation, movement and omission of the unpronounced material involved in B's utterance, information required to complete its meaning can be found in the immediately previous discourse; it is 'copy-pasted', as it were, from there (but see also our pragmatic account of anaphora in terms of presupposition in Sect. 6). Whether this 'copy-pasted' material will be assumed by a syntactic theory to be part of the structure of B's utterance in (19) that simply does not surface, or rather B's utterance in (19) will be completed in the hearer's mental representation of the utterance need not concern us for the purpose of this comparison. Either way, we know exactly what form the missing part has and where to find it. In (20) and (21), however, there is no preceding utterance on the basis of which we can recover the missing material, and yet the meaning seems clear—presumably because of the interaction of the utterance with the extralinguistic contextual information we are given. Now, if we were to complete the part missing from (20), the simplest solution would be to postulate that what is meant is 'this is my brother' (see Merchant 2004). If this determinate completion is assumed, then (20) becomes more similar to (19). Let us accept this solution for the time being (but see Sect. 4.2 for a discussion of whether this completion is satisfactory). In (21), however, things get more complicated because if we were to reconstruct the part missing from the utterance, we would have to choose among a range of possible equivalent completions, such as 'you get 12 points', 'your word is worth 12 points', 'I am noting down 12 points for you in this round', etc. All of them are more or less equivalent in that they are interchangeable and would achieve the same effect in the above context of use. Yet, the syntactic structure of the missing part in (21) is indeterminate.

To sum up, the recovery of meaning in cases such as (21) depends on extralinguistic information much more than it does in (19). As a consequence, cases such as (21) are licensed to appear in 'discourse-initial position', whereas cases such as (19) have to follow the antecedent their completion is based on. Case (20) falls somewhere in-between because the sentence can also appear in a discourse-initial position and its completion is not as straightforward as that of (19), yet is arguably not as context dependent as that of (21). Syntactic approaches to incomplete utterances subsume cases like (20) under ellipsis but do not consider the category exemplified in (21). In what follows, we turn to a more detailed review and assessment of syntactic and pragmatic approaches.

## 4.2 *The Syntactic Approach to Incomplete Utterances*

Let us consider the options we have for accounting for (19)–(21). As was mentioned in the previous section, utterances that are structurally incomplete but convey complete propositions give rise to the problem of how to account for this mismatch between form and meaning, which in its turn seems to posit a threat to compositionality. There are two ways to tackle this problem. The first is to start from the overt structure and assume that the non-overtly communicated aspects of meaning are in-



herently present in the structure of the utterance but are not visible on the surface. In other words, they are left unpronounced. We can call this ‘the syntactic approach’ to incomplete utterances because it attempts to place the completion on the level of the structure (see, e.g. Merchant 2004, 2010; Stanley 2000, 2007). However, a syntactic account of incomplete utterances does not acknowledge that there are substantial differences between (19) and (20) above; it attempts to subsume both under the umbrella of syntactic ellipsis. As for example (21), the syntactic approach would either deny that it is propositional or it would remain silent about it. The second strategy is to start from the conveyed meaning and resort to extralinguistic contextual sources in order to account for the recovery of meaning. We can call this ‘the pragmatic approach’ to incomplete utterances (see e.g. Barton 1990; Stainton 2006). In the pragmatic approach, so long as an utterance conveys a recoverable meaning, there is no reason for it to be judged as non-propositional simply because it is structurally incomplete. We will now argue that the syntactic approach to incomplete utterances is not satisfactory mainly because, as was shown in Sect. 4.1, there are important differences between the kinds of incompleteness. Moreover, accounts within the syntactic approach suffer from circularity insofar as their choice to treat all cases of subsentential speech as cases of syntactic ellipsis is motivated by their theoretical assumptions and is not independently supported. In short, syntactic accounts cannot capture the complexity of the empirical facts. Before we proceed in Sect. 5 to illustrating how a specific account within the pragmatic/contextualist orientation could offer a more adequate solution to the problem of representing incomplete utterances, we will elaborate on the above points by reviewing two proposals within the syntactic approach: Stanley’s indexicalism (Stanley 2000, 2007) and Merchant’s ‘limited ellipsis account’ (Merchant 2004, 2010).

Stanley’s (2000) indexicalism is based on the radical claim that there is no effect of the extralinguistic context on the truth-conditional content of an utterance that cannot be traced to elements of the logical form of the utterance (Stanley 2000, p. 392). Thus, to account for aspects of meaning that do not correspond to constituents in the structure of an utterance, Stanley postulates hidden variables in the logical form. These hidden indexicals behave just like overt indexicals such as ‘I’, ‘here’, ‘today’, in that they acquire their referents from contextual information. Since contextual enrichment is now entirely driven by these hidden terms in the logical form, it is entirely linguistically constrained. To illustrate, for an utterance such as ‘It’s raining’, Stanley (2000, p. 416) assumes variables in the logical form for the time (*t*) and location (*l*) at which ‘it is raining’ takes place, invoking arguments from binding in support. It is not our intention to argue that the indexicalist account is implausible with regards to weather predicates. What does seem implausible, however, is the claim that we can extend this approach to account for all kinds of context dependency, including meaning conveyed by incomplete utterances such as our (21) above.<sup>12</sup>

Our objection to indexicalism was that it is guilty of circularity, insofar as its assumptions are not independently supported but rather overlap with its motivations.

<sup>12</sup> Stanley (2000, p. 402) explicitly claims that there is no such thing as a non-sentential assertion.

In many cases, there is no independent reason for postulating hidden indexicals in the logical form of an utterance. There is merely the drive to present all context dependency as linguistically controlled (see also Clapp (2012) for a thorough criticism of indexicalism). The rationale for indexicalism is that, since the resolution of purely indexical terms does not threaten a compositional account of meaning, an expansion of the category of indexicals would solve the problem that incomplete utterances posit. To repeat, the latter would appear incomplete only on the surface and their completion would not have to resort to any form of top-down contextual enrichment. Stanley (2000, pp. 429–430) rejects pragmatic enrichment as unmotivated and unpersuasive. However, it is not clear what makes the postulation of numerous hidden indexicals—and ‘numerous’ is what will be required if we are to account for the pervasiveness of context dependency—in the logical form more plausible than resorting to pragmatic enrichment.

This issue is related to a more general ontological objection against assuming any kind of hidden entities in the logical form, where it is argued that we need to have a clearer idea about their status, and this status cannot be defined by the problem they are ad hoc introduced to fix (cf. Schiffer 1992). Moreover, there is a crucial difference between Stanley’s hidden indexicals and standard overt indexicals, insofar as the latter can never be covertly existentially bound but have to come with a determinate reference value. For example, ‘She is funny’ cannot mean that some woman or other is funny, which is not the case with the variable (*l*) in the case of the ‘it is raining’ example above (Recanati 2007, p. 138). Finally, the existence of hidden entities in the logical form of certain expressions would be supported if these entities were shown to be obligatorily required by the properties of these expressions (Schiffer 1996, p. 97). In addition to these technical problems, we could argue that given the pervasiveness of context dependency, what is implausible is *not* to resort to top-down pragmatic enrichment but to keep assuming hidden material in the syntactic structure of utterances in order to account for all contextually contributed aspects of meaning.<sup>13</sup> Finally, our strongest objection towards indexicalism is that it seems inadequate to account for the complexity of the empirical facts. But before we turn to the latter point, we briefly consider another proposal within the syntactic approach, namely Merchant’s ‘limited ellipsis’ account (Merchant 2004, 2010).

Having dealt with more straightforward cases of syntactic ellipsis such as sluicing (see Merchant 2001), Merchant extends his theory of ellipsis and suggests that cases of incomplete utterances such as the ones in (22)–(24) below are also instances of VP-ellipsis where a VP [do it] is left unpronounced:

(22) [As a response to an offer of a second piece of chocolate]

‘I really shouldn’t’.

(23) [Seeing someone about to set their hair on fire]

‘Don’t’.

<sup>13</sup> Indexicalism has not yet offered accounts that exhaust context dependency but instead has dealt with specific cases such as quantifier domain restriction and classes of comparison related to adjectives (e.g. ‘John is tall’ (for a 10-year-old kid; see Stanley 2007). This is one of the reasons why we focus on questioning the motivation behind the approach and its general potential.

(24) [Seeing someone about to jump off a bridge]  
‘She won’t’.

(From Merchant 2004, p. 718; (22) is adapted from Schachter 1978; (24) from Stanley 2000)

According to Merchant’s account, the hearer need only assume the existence of [do it] in the structure of the utterance and then work out what ‘it’ refers to, in the same way that anaphora is generally worked out on the basis of extralinguistic context. The exact verb the speaker had in mind need not be recovered. This concession introduces a distinction between regular VP-ellipsis and the phenomenon in question, so long as in standard VP-ellipsis the exact missing verb is recoverable (Merchant 2004, p. 721). Merchant then goes on to give an account along the same lines for (seemingly) discourse-initial fragments that involve deictics and pronominals (2004, pp. 723–724), such as (20) given above and repeated below:

(20) A person walks in while I talk to a friend. Both of us notice him. I utter to my friend:  
*‘My brother’*.

For such examples, the account postulates that the hearer will recover [this is] to complete the utterance.<sup>14</sup> After this step is performed, it is up to the context to provide the salient entity that ‘this’ refers to. But (20) is now as context dependent as any sentence involving an overt demonstrative. In other words, subsentences without linguistic antecedents are for Merchant no more pragmatically dependent than fully sentential utterances requiring reference resolution.

All in all, Merchant’s is a coherent and economical account so long as it manages to reduce the problem of subsentences by assuming a general [do it] or [this is] in their structure to make them fully sentential. From the point of view of the clarity of the underlying syntactic structure, this seems to be a rather successful account. Its deficiencies come to light when one starts thinking of the semantic potential. Even if we did recover the very general constituent Merchant proposes, what does it actually add beyond making the sentence complete? The answer seems to be ‘not much’. Completing an utterance on the structural level does not make it semantically complete; in fact, it is widely accepted that even structurally complete utterances suffer from semantic underdeterminacy (see Bach 1994, 2001, 2007). Completing an incomplete utterance only as far as its structure is concerned seems a vacuous solution from a semantic/pragmatic point of view. Moreover, if we are interested in the psychological plausibility of our account of meaning, then assuming first a very general constituent whose role is exhausted in merely completing the sentence structure and then postulating an additional step for the recovery of what the general constituent actually stands for, does not seem either economical or, indeed, cognitively justified.

<sup>14</sup> Treating such cases as shorthand for ‘this is X’ is also suggested by Stanley (2000, p. 409).

### 4.3 *Capturing the Empirical Facts*

Our strongest objection to both Stanley's and Merchant's<sup>15</sup> accounts of fragmentary utterances is that neither can capture the empirical facts which are often far more complicated than our examples (20) and (22)–(24). At this point, we need to stress that it is not the case that we do not accept that there are cases of pure syntactic ellipsis for which a syntactic approach could be adequate. One such example would be the case in (19). We also acknowledge that there are cases for which the indexicalist approach is a plausible proposal, e.g. cases that require quantifier domain restriction (see Stanley and Szabó 2000). However, the reason both approaches discussed above reach the conclusion that there is no propositional subsentential utterance they cannot capture is that they are considering only the simplest cases of fragmentary utterances. It is not clear how either the hidden-indexical account or the [do it]/[this is] account would explain (21). Presumably, Merchant would exclude (21) as non-propositional *tout court*. It is even less clear how either of the two would account for the cases that are the focus of this chapter, namely the examples of incomplete disjunctive questions. A pragmatic approach, on the other hand, not only would be more adequate to account for the empirical facts (as we will show in the following sections), but also there is one further advantage to it: It is not incompatible with accepting that some cases of incomplete utterances could indeed be treated satisfactorily by a syntactic account as cases of syntactic ellipsis. This is because pragmatics, being on the top of the hierarchy of levels of linguistic representation, could and should subsume syntactic solutions where such are independently motivated. We show how the role of syntax can be incorporated within a pragmatic contextualist approach such as DS when we explain the interaction-based approach towards compositionality. According to our contextualist proposal, different sources of information capture different aspects of meaning (Jaszczolt 2005, 2010). The lexicon and the structure of the sentence are among these sources, but the composition is not limited to these inputs. In other words, what we propose is, so to speak, the opposite of what syntactically oriented approaches do: Instead of subsuming all cases of subsentential speech under the umbrella of syntactic ellipsis, we subsume syntactic ellipsis under the wider and more diverse class of incompleteness and tackle different categories accordingly.

There is one last point that should be made with regards to the assessment of the syntactic approaches' adequacy to account for subsentential speech. It emerges from the comparison between different types of incomplete utterances we began this section with. As we saw there, (20) and (21) differ from (19) in that only (20) and (21) can appear in a discourse-initial position, without a preceding antecedent on which their completion can be based. In order to tackle the problem that pure syntactic ellipsis cannot appear discourse-initially, both Merchant (2004, p. 724) and Stanley (2000, pp. 404–405) attempt to redefine the term 'discourse-initial position'. They

<sup>15</sup> In a revised version of his account, Merchant (2010) moves closer to Stanley's indexicalism, in that he treats more complex cases of incomplete utterances as providing slots in their structure, to be completed on the basis of contextual information.

argue that a subsentence could be a response to an implicit antecedent question so that, e.g. (20) above could be the answer to a questioning gaze or gesture at the moment when a new person enters the room. This gaze is interpreted as ‘Who is this?’ We do not disagree that discourse in the broad sense does not have to involve solely linguistic material, that it can be initiated by a gesture or a gaze, and that it is very likely for subsentences such as (20) and (21) to be answers to some such gesture. However, this is one more piece of evidence in support of the claim that pragmatic ellipsis is best not regarded as subsumed under syntactic ellipsis. If the antecedent of the fragment is not linguistic, then, although it contributes to the recovery of meaning, it does not make recoverable a precise linguistic structure. And such a precise structure should be expected for cases of syntactic ellipsis. Admittedly, Stanley (2000, p. 396) expresses a concern that the moment we allow pragmatic enrichment to enter our theory of meaning, we cross the boundary between linguistic behaviour and other kinds of human behaviour such as ‘kicks under the table and taps on the shoulder’. But this very concern seems to be ignored when he admits that a discourse-initial position can be occupied by a gaze or a gesture. It is a fact about language that its use interacts with nonlinguistic information but the solution to the explanatory difficulties caused by this interaction is not to treat nonlinguistic information as if it were linguistic, but rather to turn to a more thorough investigation of the interaction between these different kinds of information that contribute to meaning with an equal impact and strength as information conveyed by the lexicon and the structure. We elaborate on this point in Sect. 7 when we attend to the merger of information coming from different sources and propose relevant representations.

To conclude, it cannot be denied that incomplete utterances such as (21) and cases of incomplete disjunction that are the focus of this chapter are frequently and meaningfully used in natural conversation. Also, it seems counterintuitive to deny that they are propositional. From the latter point, it follows that they must be complete at some level of representation. The question then is, at what level one should postulate the completion of incomplete utterances. We argued that the structural level of the sentence is not always an adequate solution because recovery of meaning in cases such as (20)–(24) above depends on extralinguistic information much more than it does in (19). Such cases are licensed to appear in the discourse-initial position, and their completion is indeterminate as far as the structure, but not the meaning, is concerned. We have proposed that these factors call for a pragmatically oriented approach to incomplete utterances. Consequently, other instances of non-recoverability of the (putatively) intended material, such as our open-ended disjunctive question in (13) repeated below, will follow suit:

(13) A: Well, you might be lucky, but the reality is that you’d have to wait.

B: How long wait?

A: Well, that I couldn’t say.

B: A year or...?

A: I really couldn’t answer that.

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We turn now to illustrating this in practice.

## 5 Default Semantics for Missing Disjuncts: Sources of Information and Corresponding Processes

We now proceed to discussing the sources of information about the contents of the missing disjuncts. For this purpose, we shall use the sources identified in the contextualist theory of DS (Jaszczolt 2005, 2010) and the corresponding processes that, as DS maintains, jointly contribute to the representation of utterance meaning. This representation is called the merger representation in that it constitutes the output of a range of processes that take information from a range of sources. Henceforth we shall use the symbol  $\Sigma$  to note the compositional summation of such bits of information. A fortiori, compositionality is here understood as pragmatic, interactive compositionality (Recanati 2004; Jaszczolt 2005).

DS identifies the following sources of information: word meaning and sentence structure (WS) that corresponds to the logical form of the sentence as it is understood on standard formal semantic accounts; situation of discourse (SD); properties of human inferential system (IS), such as the property of intentionality ascribed to mental states accompanying intentional communication; stereotypes and presumptions about society and culture (SC); and world knowledge (WK), such as knowledge of physical laws governing the behaviour of matter, space, or time. The formal representation itself is then presented in terms of processes that draw information from these sources. The following processes are identified in DS: combining word meaning and sentence structure; conscious pragmatic inference (CPI) from situation of discourse, social and cultural assumptions, and world knowledge; cognitive defaults (CD), which are automatic contributions resulting from the properties of the human inferential system; and social, cultural and world-knowledge defaults (SCWD), understood as automatically recovered meanings that come from the cultural and social environment shared by the interlocutors.<sup>16</sup>

One of the most pertinent questions that arise is whether the completions of disjunctive sentences are always inferential. In the DS-theoretic terms, the question is whether they always rely on CPI. Using evidence from various corpora of Australian spoken English, Haugh (2011) argues that they also rely on salient meanings that he calls pragmatic defaults. First, in the case of complete disjunctive utterances of the form '*p* or *q*', the choice between the exclusive and the inclusive meaning relies on the *socio-pragmatic* (or *discursive*) default: the exclusive meaning is such a default interpretation. This default corresponds to the DS-theoretic category of the SCWD. Equally, socio-pragmatic defaults are said to govern the behaviour of incomplete disjunctive interrogatives. As he says, 'not-saying through utterance-final disjunction interrogatives is a recurrent and recognisable discursive practice in casual spoken English' (Haugh 2011, p. 206), and this practice is facilitated by the fact that one of the readings, namely the polar one ('*p* or not *p*') is the presumed, salient one.

<sup>16</sup> The sources and processes are taken from the revised version of DS that appeared in Jaszczolt (2009) and, in a résumé version, in Jaszczolt (2010).

But the interaction of the sources of information about the missing disjunct is not an easy subject for generalizations and may prove to require more than CPI and SCWD to draw on. First, we have to consider the fact that the exclusive disjunction is a more informative, stronger interpretation than the inclusive one. As such, it seems to reflect the working of some general, default cognitive mechanism that renders the readings with stronger referential intention and stronger intentionality (or: ‘aboutness,’ as a property of the speaker’s mental state that accompanies uttering the sentence fragment). Seen in these terms, it seems to belong in the category of a CD in DS. In terms of the source of information, it therefore falls under the category of the properties of the human IS. The same conclusion can be reached through employing the reasoning from scales: Since the stronger element of the scale <and, or> was not uttered, it is not the case that both of the propositions are the case. The inclusive reading will only arise by default in constructions with the specific semantic property of downward entailment (see Chierchia 2004) as in (25):

(25) I haven’t met anyone who would like earwigs or cockroaches.

Needless to say, since the DS-theoretic defaults are not defaults for language constructions, sentences, words, or any other units that belong with the language system, but rather *defaults for the speaker and for the context* (in other words, they are pragmatically defined, automatically achieved, subdoxastic readings), not every occurrence of a disjunction will give rise to such an interpretation.<sup>17</sup> We will thus be able to account for instances where inclusive disjunction is intended and retrieved. In the case of such an inclusive reading, there is no cancellation of defaults à la Levinson (2000), but instead we have the case where information about this inclusive meaning is indicated by the SD, stereotypes and presumptions about SC, WK, or indeed the structure and the lexicon alone (WS), as for example in metalinguistic disjunction in (26). This inclusive reading is processed either inferentially (as CPI) or subdoxastically, as defaults (CD or SCWD):

(26) We will need twenty informants, or (should I say) consultants, for the pilot study.

Next, if, as the data suggest, polar interpretations are indeed widespread, one may be tempted to pose the hypothesis that polar readings of incomplete disjunctive interrogatives always arise in virtue of the source SC and via the process SCWD. But it would not be correct to assume that this is the case, even as a working hypothesis for further testing. If there is a default, automatic interpretation involved, such an interpretation may owe its presence to the semantic properties of the lexical item (such as absolute vs. gradable), aided by the subject matter of the dialogue, as in (10) repeated here, where the lexical item ‘official’, paired with the requirements of the dialogue at hand, may result in an automatic completion ‘or not’, or perhaps ‘or unofficial’.

(10) Is that sort of official or...?

<sup>17</sup> Or, as Haugh (2011, p. 217) puts it, ‘those arguing against the existence of default inferencing have been locating defaults in the wrong place’. ‘Inferencing’ is used here in the wide sense and subsumes automatic processing of information.

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In this case, we have the activation of the CD whereby intentionality, as a property of the human IS, gears our reasoning to the strongest possible alternative (polar). On other occasions, polar readings can be inferred from the context through CPI or retrieved automatically from the sociocultural common ground (SCWD). The picture that emerges is thus on one hand very promising for DS, in that only a radical contextualist approach such as DS can faithfully reflect this diversity of ways of arriving at the intended reading, and on the other disappointing as far as the possibility of proposing algorithms for disjunctive interrogatives is concerned: The constructions corresponding to intended (and recovered) meanings are pragmatic, messy, and malleable, with the social and individual factors intricately interwoven in their interpretation.

It goes without saying that some types of completions will be more common and more standardised than others. Some will be driven by common, shared sociocultural presumptions rather than by context-dependent inferences. Such a completion yields itself particularly well to the SCWD source of information in DS. For example, tacit knowledge that it is customary to enquire about the weather while talking about a holiday trip in order to express an interest and thereby appear polite suffices to complete C's utterance in (27). Notably, the trailing-off disjunctive also relaxes the preference for a confirming response (SCWD), that is, it allows the hearer to produce a disconfirmation without the need to treat it as a 'dispreferred' that would require a display of hesitation or an account (Drake 2013). In that sense, it also indicates a polite stance.

(27)C: Did you get good weather or...?

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It has to be noted that the application of SC as a source of information, and at the same time SCWD as a process responsible for arriving at this information, is independent of the classification of this sentence as a polar question. On one level of generalization, the completion is as in (27a):

(27a)C: Did you get good weather or didn't you/was the weather bad/...etc?

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On a more detailed level, such an incomplete utterance invites completions that fall under the category of 'bad weather' such as heavy rain, excessive cold, or excessive heat. B's answer from this corpus extract exemplifies that both the general and the specific level are entertained at the same time, as in (27b) that includes elaboration on the polar answer:

(27b) C: Did you get good weather or...?

B: It was. And then we had a hot week, didn't we. Boiling hot.

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On the other hand, in (28), hesitation and the repetition of 'or', as well as the scenario of an interview during a doctor's appointment, appear to invite descending directly to the set of alternatives.



(28) A: Do you go out regularly or or...?

B: Only when I need shopping. And not then if it's a nasty day.

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The availability of the alternatives will be an important factor in choosing between the ‘polar+elaboration’ option (example 27) and the ‘elaboration only’ option (example 28). As Geurts (2010, pp. 127–129) points out, implicatures that are derived on the basis of a closed set are more robust than those derived on the basis of an open set. In terms of utterance interpretation, a closed set of alternatives results in more robust inferences than an open set. Equally, a clearly delimited set that is readily subconsciously available gives rise to robust default interpretations on the level of the elaborations.

SCWD does not act in isolation from other processes in DS. It is the WS that in the first instance triggers the SCWD or CPI. In (29), it is the processing of the lexicon and structure that triggers the implicature  $\neg [e_1 \wedge e_2]$ , as summarised in (29a). Tacit knowledge that one does not pay the same bill twice is handled by SCWD:<sup>18</sup>

(29) Tim will pay the bill on Thursday or Friday.

(29a)  $[e_1 \vee e_2]_{WS}$

$\neg [e_1 \wedge e_2]_{SCWD}$

On the contrary, WS applied in sentence (30) would not result in the activation of SCWD.

(30) To get this part, the actress must be very talented or be a spitting image of Grace Kelly.

So, in addition to discussing the inferential vis-à-vis the default status of completions, it is necessary to consider the interaction between the processes that are responsible for producing the merger representation. This also concurs with Geurts’ (2010) understanding of defaults as meanings that arise systematically in discourse. For the purpose of this chapter, we shall largely leave aside the discussion surrounding localism and globalism about implicatures, adhering to a common-sense view that default meanings, and inference-driven meanings alike, arise on the basis of units of different length, as appropriate for the context at hand, and therefore neither strict localism (Levinson 2000) nor globalism (Geurts 2010) is the preferred option.<sup>19</sup>

To sum up, we have argued in this section that different processes identified in DS can be responsible for the merger representation of an incomplete disjunctive interrogative. We have shown some rudimentary principles of the interaction of these processes and discussed the linguistic and extralinguistic sources of information from which they draw their material. We have also indicated, referring to arguments presented elsewhere (Jaszczolt 2012), that the length of the unit on which the process operates will vary with the situation, and therefore neither strict localism à la Levinson (2000) or Chierchia (2004), nor traditional Gricean globalism will be adopted in our  $\Sigma$ s.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Biezma and Rawlins (2012, p. 402); see also the discussion in Jaszczolt (2005, pp. 210–211).

<sup>19</sup> On this topic, see also Jaszczolt (2012) for ‘flexible inferential bases’ and ‘fluid characters’.

## 6 Alternative Semantics and the Mechanism for Identifying Alternatives

The study of fragmentary disjunctive interrogatives will not be complete without accounting for the role of focus in that the main function of focus is to invoke semantically and pragmatically plausible alternatives—a fact that has been theoretically exploited in alternative semantics (see e.g. Rooth 1996). Traditionally, focus (that can make use of a variety of ways of marking prominence, including prosodic and syntactic), has been marked on a syntactic phrase as in  $[[p]]^f$ , to signal a focus semantic value, where  $p$  stands for a proposition.<sup>20</sup> Then, within  $p$ , there is a focused element marked by F as in (31) that gives rise to a set of propositions as in (32) that can be represented formally as in (33). For the purpose of this presentation, we are ignoring tense and number.

(31)  $[[\text{Lidia likes } [cats]_F]]^f$

(32) Lidia likes  $x$ .

(33)  $\langle \lambda x[\text{like}(l, x)], c \rangle$

In words, Lidia likes *cats* as opposed to other  $x$ 's (pets or objects of appreciation). To compare, focus on 'Lidia' would result in (34)–(36) (adapted from Rooth 1996, pp. 275–277).

(34)  $[[ [Lidia]_F \text{ likes cats} ]]^f$

(35)  $y$  likes cats.

(36)  $\langle \lambda y [\text{like}(y, c)], l \rangle$

In words, it is *Lidia*, rather than someone else ( $y$ ), who likes cats. In alternative semantics, the focused constituent ( $c$  or  $l$  above) is treated somewhat differently in that the focused element introduces a variable that is given a value by the set of alternatives that itself constitutes the semantic value of the relevant question. Here, alternative semantics makes use of traditional semantics of questions such as Hamblin's (Hamblin 1973) proposal that the semantic value of a question is a set of potential (true and false) answers that are propositional in form. The analysis is presuppositional: in (31), 'Lidia likes  $[x]$ ' introduces a presupposition that  $x$  belongs to a set. Next, the variable  $x$  has to find an antecedent. The antecedent for  $x$  is now construed as the semantic value of a question. It corresponds there to sets of alternatives that are semantically as well as pragmatically motivated. Rooth (1996, p. 278) says:

...the ultimate source of the alternative set is the semantics and/or pragmatics of questions: questions determine sets of possible answers. Focus seems to evoke this alternative set in a presuppositional way, indicating that it is *present for independent reasons*.<sup>21</sup>

For (31), the pertinent question is, for example, (37):

(37) Does Lidia like cats or dogs?

<sup>20</sup> See Rooth (1996) for a detailed comparative assessment of the traditional and alternative-semantic accounts of focus.

<sup>21</sup> Our emphasis.

For our purposes, we can utilise this presuppositional treatment of focus somewhat differently so as to provide a contextualist semantics for incomplete disjunctive questions. We start with (38):

(38) Does Lidia like [cats]<sub>F</sub> or...?

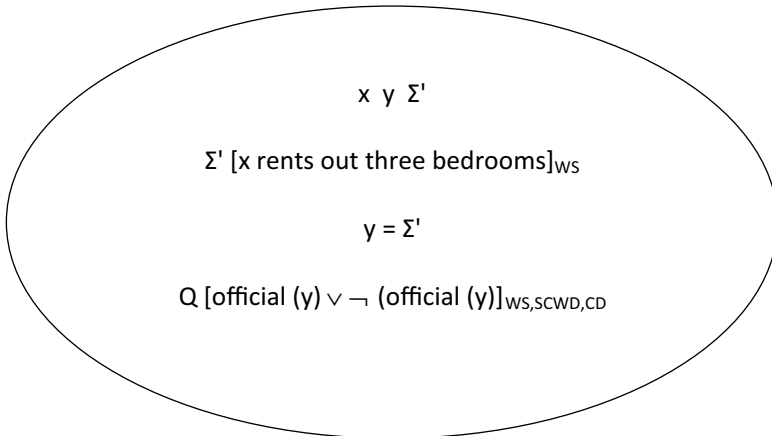
Analogous to Rooth's analysis, the focused element introduces a variable. But it is now given a value by the set of alternatives that itself constitutes the semantic value of the complete question. Again, as before, this variable is pragmatically constructed. Now, in Rooth's analysis of indicative sentences the interpretation of the focus variable looks for an antecedent in the semantic value of the relevant question. The process is construed as a straightforward anaphora resolution. But our object of investigation is already of the form of a disjunctive question, but an *incomplete* disjunctive question. Since it is incomplete, we do not have here a case of a reversal of an *explanandum* (i.e. the phenomenon that needs to be explained) and an *explanans* (i.e. the explanation of that phenomenon); incomplete questions are not yet *explanantia* (i.e. explanations). We have to proceed as in the case of declaratives, postulating a variable for [cats]<sub>F</sub> in (38) and a presuppositional analysis that involves a search for an antecedent with reference to a complete question. But we will need an extra step. While in the case of declaratives it was fairly sufficient to talk about antecedents in terms of (pragmatic) binding, in that the relevant question was assumed in this formal approach to constitute an independently given semantic/pragmatic object, the semantic variable in an incomplete open question is best treated in a contextualist, pragmatic way. Incomplete questions do not magically correspond to full questions with the second disjunct magically instantiated. As we could see from the examples from our database, the second disjunct may not even be clear to the speaker; it may not even be intended. So, postulating a theoretical construct of an alternative question that provides the antecedents we want will not suffice. Instead of subsuming semantic and pragmatic factors under the general mechanism of binding that leads to the suitable antecedent, we have to emphasise the difference between binding and accommodation. Strictly speaking, the very fact that the utterance consists of an incomplete disjunction in the form of an interrogative signals that the *explanans*, the complete question, may simply not be available. Needless to say, it *is* available in some cases identified in our typology in Sect. 2, but we want our account to generalize to the entire category and this includes also an open-ended disjunction (with an open set), a politeness disjunction with, for example, a metalinguistic second disjunct ('...or perhaps I shouldn't have asked?'), and a 'discourse marker *or*'. So, the semantics of focus construed as a presuppositional analysis will have to be, so to speak, pragmatized: Instead of postulating our *explanantia* in the form of alternative questions, we have to pay attention to the *mechanism* of finding these *explanantia*. For this purpose, we shall use van der Sandt's (1992, 2012) theory of presupposition as anaphora where, whenever the search for an antecedent via binding, proceeding along the projection line, does not succeed, we resort to contextual accommodation—global if possible, and failing that, local. Presupposition as anaphora is widely employed for representing discourse in DRT, of which our DS

is an offshoot. DS makes use of an amended and extended language of DRT but shifts the object of analysis in a more pragmatic direction, to that of an intended and recovered primary meaning that is much more loosely dependent on the structure of the sentence than the objects represented in the discourse representation structures (DRSs) of DRT. Likewise, to repeat, the principle of compositionality is assumed to apply on the level of the interaction of linguistic and nonlinguistic information. It is therefore not surprising that we find it appropriate to adopt presupposition as anaphora, which is in itself a pragmatics-rich approach to presupposition, in DS that is in itself already envisaged as ‘more pragmatic’, so to speak, in its object of analysis than DRT. We shall thus rely on alternative semantics so amended, with accommodation as a mechanism for the search of the ‘missing disjuncts’, in providing a contextualist semantic representation of incomplete interrogative disjunctions, using the sources of information and the processes that are identified in DS and introduced here in Sect. 5. While for van der Sandt and DR-theoretic analyses accommodation simply means looking into the context for the antecedent, in DS we will be able to go further and be more precise about the exact sources from which this information is derived, and the processes by which it is added.

All in all, the purpose of this discussion of alternative semantics for focus was to spell out the theoretical underpinnings of the merger representations provided in the next section. Incomplete disjunctive questions were demonstrated here to be analysable in terms of alternative semantics, with the proviso that, just as the object of study is a pragmatic one and involves incompleteness that cannot be traced back to the syntactic structure (see Sect. 4), so the theory will have to emphasise the mechanism by which this incompleteness can be resolved. We have found this missing aspect in accommodation understood as in van der Sandt’s theory of presupposition as anaphora.

## 7 Merger Representations for Incomplete Disjunctive Questions

We are now in a position to give some representations of such incomplete disjunctive questions. Interrogative constructions will be analysed according to the principles presented in Sect. 6 and the representations will be built using the DS-theoretic language. The type of process that contributes to the compositional construction of utterance meaning is marked in  $\Sigma$  by an index following the material on which it operates (enclosed in square brackets). Three basic types of such interrogatives used to communicate a question will be under scrutiny and these will correspond to the classes from our typology in Sect. 2: (i.a) polar question and (i.b) local question, where local can be either (ii.b') communicating a closed set or (ii.b'') communicating an open set of alternatives. These categories correspond to examples from our database marked above as (10)–(12) respectively and repeated below. To repeat, we



**Fig. 1**  $\Sigma^P$  for example (10) (incomplete polar question)

shall not go down to the subcategorization into exclusive/inclusive distinction for this purpose:

(10) Is that sort of official or...?

ICE-GB: S1A-071 105 (casual conversation about room rental)

(11) Would it be typed documents or...?

ICE-GB: S1A-024 045 (talking about a corpus of texts)

(12) Uh from the solo you mean or...?

ICE-GB: S1A-021 081 (rehearsing a song)

Merger representations for (10)–(12) are presented in Figs. 1, 2 and 3, respectively.

Figure 1 is a partial merger representation ( $\Sigma^P$ ) in that we are not representing the content of  $\Sigma'$ . The internal structure of  $\Sigma'$  is left unanalysed as it is not relevant for the purpose of the current discussion. The discourse referent  $x$  is realised in the discourse as third-person singular masculine pronoun ('he' and 'his') for which the discourse condition is anaphorically provided in the earlier parts of the conversation. As we are working here on extracts from the corpus of real conversations, the availability of the discourse condition that identifies  $x$  can be taken for granted. The operator  $Q$  stands for the speech act of a question and the polar reading is recovered via the processing of  $WS$  combined with the  $SCWD$  that automatically triggers such an interpretation. The  $CD$  will always provide the exclusive reading of a disjunction in that it captures the Gricean pragmatic strengthening of  $(p \vee q)$  to  $(p \vee q) \wedge \neg (p \wedge q)$ .

In example (11), the addressee is likely to interpret the incomplete question as a local one with a closed set of alternatives. The set is presumed to be closed via the

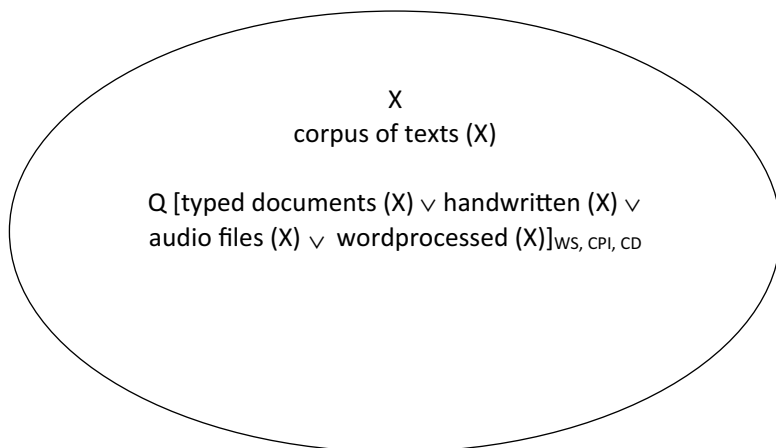


Fig. 2  $\Sigma$  for example (11) (incomplete local question, closed set)

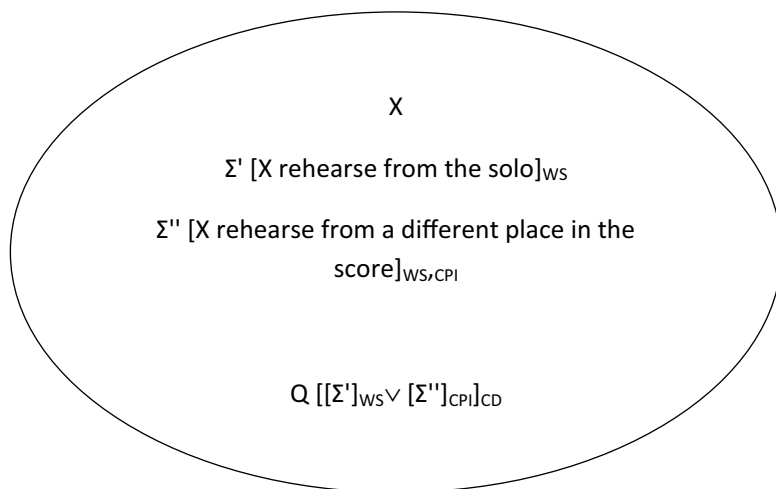


Fig. 3  $\Sigma^P$  for example (12) (incomplete local question, open set/polar)

process of pragmatic inference, marked in Fig. 2 by the index CPI.<sup>22</sup> The elaboration in the extract from the database that refers to most of it being ‘in a machine-readable form’ includes a closed set of possible formats such as word processed, handwritten and scanned, or audiofiles automatically transferrable into print. Upper-case ‘X’ stands for a plural discourse referent. As before, CD ensures the exclusive interpretation. But it has to be remembered that since  $\Sigma$ s are representations of utterances in particular context, this is only a sample salient reading. It is also possible that

<sup>22</sup> One could also construe it as an output of the SCWD source but invoking such a set automatically seems less likely. As always, the merger representation will model the actual situation of discourse, so both options are feasible.

another token of this incomplete disjunctive question will give rise to an inclusive interpretation, or to a straightforward polar one ('typed or not typed').

Figure 3 is a partial merger representation in that the structure of  $\Sigma'$  and  $\Sigma''$  is not represented, neither is the future-time reference of the question.<sup>23</sup> X stands for a plural discourse referent realised in the sentence as 'we', to which the discourse condition is provided in the earlier parts of the discourse. Analogous to Fig. 1, the fact that we are representing extracts of real conversations from a corpus guarantees the availability of the reference assignment. The alternatives of the place from which to resume rehearsing is limited but not delimitable for the purpose of semantic representation, in other words, it could be almost anywhere in the score. Therefore, we can represent this reading as local with an open set or alternatively as polar ('from the solo or not from the solo'). Another possibility would be to limit the alternatives to a particular section of the score and regard the uptake ('I'm second line down') as signalling such a local choice. As before, CD guarantees the exclusive reading of the disjunction.

Finally, in the tentative classification in Sect. 2 we distinguished the subcases of (i) that are on a par with those in (ii). To repeat, incomplete interrogatives that aim at eliciting an answer can also be classified with respect to such criteria as 'or' functioning as hedging (i.a') the propositional content or (i.a'') the illocutionary force; 'or' functioning as introducing another speech act with (i.b') the exclusive or (i.b'') inclusive reading. To repeat, (10) can be interpreted as (10.a')–(10.b'') below:

- (10.a') Is that sort of official or...[perhaps 'being official' is not relevant in this situation?]
- (10.a'') Is that sort of official or...[perhaps I shouldn't have asked?]
- (10.b') Is that sort of official or...[do we have to register it somewhere?] (when clearly intended as exclusive)
- (10.b'') Is that sort of official or...[is this in the contract?] (when clearly intended as inclusive)

In (10.a')–(10.b''), the representation of the resulting disjunction will always rely on CPI but otherwise will be represented following the standard principles of DS, using the acceptability operator ACC for modality in (10.a') and (10.a''),<sup>24</sup> with conjunction of a question with a modal statement in (6.b'), and a disjunction of two questions in (10.b') and (10.b''), and finally the inclusive reading specified by add-

<sup>23</sup> In DS, temporal reference is represented by means of the modal operator of acceptability (ACC), loosely modelled on Grice's (2001) sentential operator by means of which he attempted to represent alethic and practical modality. It is argued in DS that temporality as a semantic, conceptual, as well as metaphysical category is reducible to degrees of epistemic commitment to the situation represented in  $\Sigma$  and this is captured by the ACC operator on  $\Sigma$ s, indexed with a symbol pertaining to the degree of this commitment ( $\Delta$ ). So, for example, for the sentence with future-time reference 'We will rehearse from the solo' we will have  $[\text{ACC}_{\Delta}^{\text{rt}} \vdash \Sigma]_{\text{WS}}$ , read as 'It is acceptable to the degree pertaining to regular future that it is the case that  $\Sigma'$ ', which is recoverable through the processing of word meaning and sentence structure (WS). For a detailed account of the representation of temporal reference in DS see Jaszczolt (2009).

<sup>24</sup> Introduced briefly in Footnote 23.

ing a condition for the conjunction of the propositional contents under Q1 and Q2 in (10.b)".<sup>25</sup>

The DS-theoretic account adheres quite closely to the Gricean analysis of discourse in its objective of providing generalizations concerning rational behaviour in conversation, steering away from any psycholinguistic attempts to discuss the intricacies of utterance processing. It is believed that the task of building compositional, truth-conditional representations of utterance meaning using contextualist assumptions has to be kept separate from investigating the process of meaning production or comprehension in that it is a quest for generalizations, the representations of meanings intended by a Model Speaker and recovered by a Model Addressee. In other words, the focus is on the common principles, not on psycholinguistic mechanisms.<sup>26</sup> This said, a token of psycholinguistic considerations is assumed, which is best demonstrated when we compare psychologism in contextualist semantics with psychologism in logic. About the latter Frege held a very strong negative view. In a series of writings (e.g. 1884, 1893), he clearly dissociated the object of study of logic (concepts and objects) from subjective representations (ideas). He dubs the effect of psychology on logic a 'corrupting intrusion', in that '*being true* is quite different from *being held as true*' (Frege 1893, p. 202). In the contextualist approach to natural language meaning, we cannot, and would not want to, go that far. While it is true that the task is to recover general principles that could ultimately lead to formalization and computational implementation, at the same time these principles concern precisely what is 'being held as true'—not by individual agents however, but rather by model agents, theoretical constructs that embody these general principles without a danger of 'contamination' from the flaws of conversation breakdown, misjudgement of background or intentions, and the like. In short, we want to retain an account that is free from a 'corrupting intrusion' from actual conversational flaws and at the same time retain 'being held as true by model interlocutors' as the object of study.<sup>27</sup>

The next question to address is how this representation of disjunction generalizes to other languages. In other words, we want to know whether the analysis, in virtue of providing a merger representation *qua* a conceptual representation, applies universally. There is no doubt that the concept of the existence of alternatives is present in languages independently of the presence or absence of the connective for disjunction (see, e.g. von Stechow and Matthewson (2008) on semantic and pragmatic universals). So far we have followed the Gricean line of analysis that is

<sup>25</sup> Alternatively, we could represent the exclusive disjunction by  $\neg (p \wedge q)$  but it is preferred to capture the Gricean pragmatic strengthening of disjunction and treat the exclusive reading as a cognitive default marked by CD.

<sup>26</sup> In this light, it is surprising to note that Geurts interprets Grice's theory as 'deeply imbued with such psychological notions as belief, intention, and so forth' (2010, p. 67). Grice follows the noble Fregean tradition and very clearly dissociates himself from any forms of psychologism. His use of the notions of belief and intention make it very clear that he does not mean to 'psychologise' in making recourse to them.

<sup>27</sup> The need for moderate psychologism in post-Gricean pragmatics is discussed at length in Jaszczolt (2008).



almost exclusively informed by the behaviour of the English constructions of the form ‘*p* or *q*’. It has to be acknowledged, however, that some languages convey the existence of alternatives by using modality (see, e.g. Mauri and van der Auwera (2012, pp. 390–391) on Wari’, where the juxtaposition of modal clauses ‘perhaps *p*, perhaps *q*’ is the standard way of conveying the sense that we would express in English by ‘*p* or *q*’). Mauri and van der Auwera argue that the equivalence in (39), paired with the fact that modality is widely employed in the service of conveying disjunction and often historically is the source of disjunctive connectives, signals that ‘or’ expresses a modal concept:

$$(39) p \vee q \models \diamond p \wedge \diamond q$$

We do not see the conceptual modal underpinnings of disjunction as a problem for the potential (and desired) universality of merger representations as presented here. To repeat, merger representations are by stipulation conceptual representations; in this assumption and methodological requirement DS follows its mother theory of DRT (Kamp and Reyle 1993).<sup>28</sup> As conceptual structures, they have certain universal properties. The existence of alternatives, be it as epistemic, metaphysical, or deontic (communicating the concept of choice) possibilities, can be safely regarded as the foundation of disjunction. Therefore our merger representations could possibly be further reduced to representations of disjunction in terms of modal propositions, using the sentential operator of Acceptability briefly introduced above. This important matter of reductionism, and possibly supervenience, has to be left for another occasion. Suffice to say that the account would also have to account for metalinguistic disjunction it and hence include modality on the level of asserting propositions in addition to modality on the level of propositions themselves.

## 8 Conclusions and Some Predictions

Incomplete disjunctive interrogatives allow for different types of responses on the part of hearers, and for that reason can give rise to a range of pragmatic or interpersonal effects, including politeness. We have proposed a preliminary typology that attempts to characterise some of their key features, focusing on incomplete disjunctive questions. We have suggested that in order to successfully analyse different types of completions, we need a formal account of the ‘choices’ offered to hearers through fragmentary utterances. Our contention has been that only a radical contextualist approach such as DS can faithfully reflect this diversity of ways of arriving at the intended reading. As far as the possibility of proposing algorithms for disjunctive interrogatives is concerned, this diversity is definitely a challenge: The constructions corresponding to intended (and recovered) meanings are pragmatic, messy, and malleable, with the social and individual factors intricately interwoven in their interpretation. However, we suggested that this diversity of types of intended

<sup>28</sup> See also Sect. 6 above and Jaszczolt (2005) for the relation between DRT and DS.

completions yields itself to an analysis in terms of the sources of information about meaning and the corresponding processes of interpretation identified in DS.

There are, of course, other kinds of fragmentary utterances that would benefit from a similar analysis, including incomplete contrastives, such as open-ended ‘but’ (Mulder et al. 2009), and incomplete conditionals with missing consequents (Elder and Jaszczolt 2013), among others. There is also more work to be done in analysing how the mechanism for identifying what is left ‘incomplete’ lies at the heart of the various pragmatic and interpersonal features to which such fragmentary utterances can give rise. In this way, then, we can move towards a better understanding of how individual and social factors are necessarily interwoven into meanings as they arise in discourse, focusing on the source of information and the way it is processed. In this way, we also address theoretical questions pertaining to the level on which this interaction of information should be modelled.

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# Discourse and Racism: Some Conclusions of 30 Years of Research

Teun A. van Dijk

**Abstract** Racist text and talk, on the one hand, is obviously an expression of the ethnic prejudices of the author, to be described in terms of the socially shared social cognitive representations of dominant groups, and the individual prejudiced mental models of their members about concrete “ethnic events.” On the other hand, these racist discourses—as well as their racist cognitions—have a social and political function, namely maintaining the domination of the white majority. But racist discourse is not a direct expression or implementation of racist domination; such domination is mediated by the way language users as social members represent ethnic relations in their minds, and thus are able to connect to the underlying mental structures of text and talk. More specifically, the social dimension of racist discourse could thus be formulated in terms of those who control the access to, and the contents and formats of public discourse: the symbolic elites, especially in politics, the media, and education.

This chapter summarizes some of the findings of my research on discourse and racism since the early 1980s. This research has three main tenets. The first is the study of the coverage of immigration in the press, starting with a modest book in Dutch about the Dutch press, followed by studies of the British, and later, less extensively, also the Spanish and Latin American press. More or less independent of political or ideological orientation, newspapers in many parts of the “Western” world portray immigrants and minorities as different, deviant, and a threat, and focus on immigration in terms of an invasion, integration as a major social problem, and multiculturalism and diversity as a threat to cultural homogeneity. On the other hand, the problems immigrants or minorities experience because of Us are ignored or mitigated, as is especially the case for the coverage of prejudice, discrimination, and racism—not only at the extreme right. The second major focus of this research deals with political discourse, especially in a major project (with Ruth Wodak),

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Racism at the Top, that analyzes discourse on immigration in the UK, Germany, France, Austria, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands. Interestingly but not surprisingly, the topics and strategies of political discourse on immigration are very similar to the dominant coverage of these topics in the press: Immigrants are portrayed as different (such as Muslim women and their hijab), deviant, and a threat. Third, in education, textbooks also tend to reproduce stereotypes on minorities and immigrants, focus mostly on problems of immigration and integration, and typically avoid or mitigate our racism. The last phase of this project focuses on the same three dimensions of discourse and racism in Spain and Latin America—especially in a large project conducted by specialists in eight Latin American countries. One major conclusion of research on the three main domains of the discursive reproduction of racism is that the symbolic elites who control public discourse in these domains are specifically responsible for this process of reproduction.

**Keywords** Racism · Pragmatics · Discourse

After 30 years of research on discourse and racism, it is time to formulate some general conclusions, findings, and experiences. We shall begin with a chronological account of the various (sub) projects involved in this megaproject, and then formulate some general theoretical and empirical conclusions.

## 1 The Social Turn in Discourse Studies: Discourse and Racism

Until the end of the 1970s, most discourse analytical research focused on the formal structures of text and talk, such as lexical cohesion, semantic coherence, narrative and argumentative superstructures, and the interactional organization of conversation. In psychology, some of these studies found application in the study of the mental processes and representations of discourse comprehension.

Fundamentally missing in this research was the crucial *social dimension* of discourse. Only in anthropology, in the early ethnographical work of Dell Hymes on communicative events and context parameters in the 1960s, do we find a sociocultural approach to discourse—later extended by John Gumperz in the field of interactional sociolinguistics focusing on contextualization cues of dominant versus nondominant language variants. However, the theoretical basis of this work, also more generally in sociolinguistics, did not include a systematic account of specific *discourse* structures of language use as they were being explored elsewhere in discourse studies, but were typically limited to those of phonology, lexicon, and syntax (but see, e.g., Macaulay (2004).

This limitation to an analysis of the categories of sentence grammar also characterized the emergence of critical linguistics at the end of the 1970s as propagated by

Fowler et al. in their seminal book *Language and Control* (1979), usually seen as the forerunner of later critical discourse analysis (CDA). In this study, the relation between discourse and society was conceptualized rather in terms of the reproduction of power abuse and societal problems, as was later the case in the first book-length CDA studies of Wodak (1989) and Fairclough (1989).

My own contribution to CDA started in the early 1980s with the first studies on racist discourse—with which I wanted to extend my earlier work on text linguistics and the psychology of discourse comprehension. I thus also initiated the triangular, multidisciplinary approach to discourse summarized by the keywords discourse–cognition–society, in which the cognitive component is the necessary interface between discourse structures and social structures.

As we shall explore in more detail below, racist text and talk, on the one hand, is obviously an expression of the ethnic prejudices of the author, to be described in terms of the socially shared social cognitive representations of dominant groups, and the individual prejudiced mental models of their members about concrete “ethnic events.” On the other hand, these racist discourses—as well as their racist cognitions—have a social and political function, namely maintaining the domination of the white majority. But racist discourse is not a direct expression or implementation of racist domination; such domination is mediated by the way language users as social members represent ethnic relations in their minds, and thus are able to connect to the underlying mental structures of text and talk. More specifically, the social dimension of racist discourse could thus be formulated in terms of those who control the access to, and the contents and formats of, public discourse: the symbolic elites, especially in politics, the media, and education.

Within this theoretical framework, my various projects carried out since the early 1980s on discourse and racism can be summarized as follows, referring only to book-length studies (for details on all my publications on discourse and racism, see [www.discourses.org](http://www.discourses.org)):

- The first book-length study, in Dutch, focused on the coverage of immigrants in the Dutch press, focusing especially on the alleged problems they cause (Van Dijk 1983). A decade later, this early study was extended to a more detailed study of the representation of immigrants in the English press (Van Dijk 1991).
- A broader project, also since the early 1980s, dealt with the ways people in the Netherlands talk about immigrants in everyday conversation (Van Dijk 1984). This project was already multidisciplinary because it connected discourse structures (such as the semantic and narrative structures of talk) with the sociocognitive structures of ethnic prejudice and the social and political functions of racist discourse in Dutch society. During a sabbatical at the University of California at San Diego in 1985, this study was extended with data from interviews about immigration in California, with special interest in the way ethnic prejudices are communicated in society (Van Dijk 1987a). Also in the collection of studies in Smitherman-Donaldson and Van Dijk (1988), we find several early studies on the relation between discourse and racism in the USA.

- At the same time, the empirical base of this large project was extended in a study of the representation of immigrants and minorities in Dutch social science textbooks (Van Dijk 1987b).
- A first theoretical and empirical summary of a decade of research on discourse and racism included further studies of racist discourse in the parliaments of several countries as well as in business organizations. This broader framework also allowed a more general sociological account of the reproduction of racism by the symbolic elites that control the access to political, media, and educational discourse (Van Dijk 1993). Later in the 1990s, my work on ideology and power often took racist ideology as an example (Van Dijk 1998, 2008b).
- A large international project on “racism at the top” with Ruth Wodak and an international team of researchers focused on the discourse on immigration in seven Western European countries, and thus also confirmed the fundamental role of the (political) elites in the reproduction of racism in society (Wodak and Van Dijk 2000).
- Finally, since 2000, the empirical study of racist discourse was extended to an analysis of media, textbooks, and political discourse in Spain and Latin America (Van Dijk 2005). The project in Latin America was especially further detailed by multidisciplinary teams of experts in eight Latin American countries (Van Dijk 2009). As from 2014, after my move to Rio de Janeiro, I hope to continue the project with studies of antiracist political discourse in Brazil.
- Other studies on racism and discourse, also outside of CDA, began to be carried out in the 1990s after the pioneering work on racism in the press by Hartmann and Husband in the 1970s (Hartmann and Husband 1974).
- Since the end of the 1980s, Ruth Wodak and her collaborators in many projects extensively studied anti-Semitism, racism, and the extreme right in Austria and elsewhere in Europe; for instance, during the Waldheim Affair (see, among many studies, e.g., Reisigl and Wodak 2001, Wodak et al. 1990; Wodak and Van Dijk 2000; Reisigl and Wodak 2001).
- In Germany, a team led by Siegfried Jäger, at the DISS center in Duisburg, studied racist discourse in politics and the press (see, e.g., Jäger 1992; and Jäger et al. 1998).
- In Switzerland, Windisch, already since the end of the 1970s, studied the debate on immigration in terms of “la logique de la pensée populaire” (Windisch 1978, 1985, 1990).
- In Belgium, Blommaert and Verschueren in 1992 published a pragmatic study (the first of few pragmatic studies of racist discourse) in Dutch, of the debate on immigration.
- In the same year, within the paradigm of discursive psychology, Wetherell and Potter (1992) published their study of prejudiced discourse in New Zealand.
- A decade later, Henry and Tator (2002) published their study of racism in the Canadian press.
- This brief selection of book-length studies since the 1970s was accompanied by an increasing number of journal articles, especially in the 1990s, many of which published in *Discourse & Society*.



As was their main aim, most of these studies focused on the specific discourse structures of the negative representation of minorities, especially in media and political discourse. Many dealt with the more general nature of racism in white society, and some more specifically with the social psychology of ethnic prejudice. Although seldom dealt with in an integrated way, as summarized above and below, together these studies bear witness of the necessity of a combination of a discursive, cognitive, and sociopolitical approach to the study of discursive racism.

## **2 Theoretical and Empirical Conclusions**

After the general summary of my megaproject of discourse and racism, spanning the three decades between 1980 and 2010, it is imperative to formulate some of its theoretical and empirical conclusions, some of which have already briefly been mentioned above. Since the literature on racism is vast, we shall not include the many relevant references here—which can be found in the studies on discourse and racism referred to above.

### ***2.1 Defining Racism as a System of Ethnic Domination***

International studies of racism in the last decades of the twentieth century generally focused on the sociology of immigration and ethnic relations, that is, on patterns of discrimination and exclusion and on problems of integration and social cohesion, on the one hand, and on the social psychology of prejudice, on the other hand. Compared to the blatant earlier forms of explicit “racial” racism; for instance, during segregation in the USA and apartheid in South Africa, the civil rights movement in the USA, on the one hand, and worldwide decolonization internationally, on the other hand, led to more indirect forms of “new” and “symbolic” racism that increasingly focused on cultural differences. Few of these studies paid attention to the fundamental role of discourse in the reproduction of racism.

Our project therefore took a different, multidisciplinary perspective that would integrate the study of racism in the broader framework of the relations between discourse, social cognition, and society. Thus, first of all, racism was defined as a social system of ethnic domination, that is, as a form of power abuse of dominant European groups, not only in Europe and North America but also elsewhere. This system has two major dimensions, namely a sociocognitive system of socially shared ethnic prejudices and ideologies, on the one hand, and a system of discrimination or “everyday racism” in interaction and its political and organizational embedding, on the other hand. Second, discourse is the crucial interface of these two subsystems. On the one hand, dominant group members “learn” racist prejudices and ideologies through various forms of public discourse, especially through political and media discourse. On the other hand, discourse is itself a social practice and hence constitutes part of the discrimination and everyday racism that defines the social

manifestation of the system of racism. In other words, racism as a system of domination is daily reproduced by racist practices, including by text and talk, based on the underlying prejudices and ideologies shared by white Europeans.

Given the control by the symbolic elites of public discourse, our sociology of racism specifically focuses on the role of these elites in the preformulation and legitimation of racism in society in public discourse, thus spawning popular racism exacerbated by unemployment, crime, and problems of urban decay and ethnic relations in poor neighborhoods. In this way, the symbolic elites were able to deny their own—sometimes subtle—racism and to blame it on the people, thus legitimating their own policies, e.g., of immigration restrictions and negative media coverage of minorities and immigrants.

The logic of this complex theory of racism is straightforward. Racist ideologies and practices are not innate, but learned. They are largely acquired by public discourse. Such discourse is controlled by the symbolic elites. Hence, the symbolic elites bear a major responsibility in the daily production and reproduction of the various kinds of racism in society, even when popular racism may thus become a social force of its own. This popular racism in turn legitimates the symbolic elites to formulate more radical forms of racist discourse and immigration policies, as we have been able to observe in the political and social developments in Western Europe during the last decades. Much of the empirical research of this and related projects has been able to show these processes at work in the dominant discourses in politics, the mass media, research, and education.

## ***2.2 Racist Prejudices and Ideologies as Forms of Social Cognition***

The sociocognitive basis of our theoretical framework, though inspired by the new social cognition paradigm in social psychology after 1980, was similarly grounded in a broader social and discursive perspective going beyond the typical laboratory studies of social psychology. Data for this research were obtained by informal, nondirected interviewing of people of different social background in different neighborhoods in the Netherlands and California—and later elsewhere—on the one hand, as well as by systematic analysis of elite discourse of various organizations, on the other hand. The theoretical assumption of this approach was that underlying prejudices and ideologies will tend to be expressed not only in nonverbal discriminatory practices but also through text and talk. Discourse thus became a primary source of evidence for underlying social representations. In order to avoid circularity, however, it is crucial to take into account the fundamental role of context. Discourse is not a direct expression of underlying ethnic or other attitudes, but is adapted to the way participants interpret and represent the relevant parameters of the communicative situation in their context models (Van Dijk 2008a, 2009). This means, for instance, that among family members, friends, or ideological partners, people may formulate their ethnic prejudices without much restraint, but in other contexts, they may avoid

or transform their underlying racist attitudes in many ways; for instance, by familiar racist disclaimers (“I am not a racist, but...”).

It is within such a complex sociocognitive framework and with the methodological caveats spurned by the theory of context that we were able to formulate the basic dimensions of ethnic prejudices and ideologies by a systematic study of the structures and strategies of talk and text about immigrants and minorities. Thus, racist ideologies, as well as other ideologies, tend to be organized by a polarized representation of Us versus Them, where positive characteristics of the in-group and negative characteristics of the out-group are emphasized, whereas Our own negative properties (such as racism) and the positive characteristics of Them tend to be mitigated.

### 2.3 *Racism and the Structures of Discourse*

Given the pivotal role of discourse both in the acquisition of racist mental representations, as well as in their social and political reproduction by the symbolic elites, a systematic study of the structures of various genres of text and talk has been the center of my large project on racism and discourse. Practically, this means that we need to examine which properties of discourse are typical or possible expressions or manifestations of underlying ethnic prejudices and ideologies.

Methodologically, such a study has both top-down and bottom-up discovery procedures. Thus, top down, if underlying ideological structures tend to be polarized between Us versus Them, we may expect to find such polarization also in discourse, and not only in the use of the pronouns *Us* and *Them* themselves. On the other hand, bottom-up, systematic observation of what dominant group members tend to talk and write about and how they do so when they talk and write about Others provides the concrete empirical basis of a study of racist discourse.

Within such a combined methodological framework of theoretical prediction and empirical observation, analysis of everyday conversations, news and opinion articles in the press, political debates as well as textbooks yielded detailed insight in the forms and meanings of racist discourse, which may be summarized as follows:

- a. *Topics*: Talk and text about ethnic others tend to be limited to a few dominant topics, which may be summarized by the keywords *difference*, *deviance*, and *threat*. Others are first of all perceived as (very) different from us, not only in appearance but also socially and culturally (habits, religion, etc.), whereas similarities between Us and Them tend to be ignored. Although such difference may initially still be associated with exoticism, it soon deteriorates into a focus on unacceptable differences, that is, into deviance, for instance, of religion (such as the use of hijab or burka by Muslim some women, or the construction of mosques), or the assumed unwillingness or inability to learn “our” language and otherwise the lack of adapting themselves to our culture, norms, and values. Finally, the other may be perceived as a threat when they are defined as “waves” or as “invaders” of our country, as a threat to Western values and norms, or when they are seen

as aggressive and criminal. Such dominant negative topics are consistent with the underlying ideological characterization of Them as an out-group. Similarly, we may expect, and do find, that Our racism as a topic is marginal in all public discourse, unless it can be blamed on marginal in-group members (the “Others” among Us), such as neo-Nazis, the Extreme Right or football hooligans. Racism as a property of the symbolic elites obviously is seldom or never topicalized in dominant discourse—and hence also in popular talk inspired by elite discourse of politicians and the mass media.

- b. *Local meanings*: This general pattern of ethnic polarization may also be observed at the microlevels of discourse meaning; for instance, in lexical items, person and group descriptions, implications and presuppositions, and metaphors. Thus, Our group members tend to be described as normal, modern, tolerant, intelligent, hardworking, responsible, and law-abiding, whereas the Others (immigrants, minorities) tend to be described as strange, traditional or backward, intolerant, aggressive, and as criminal—with few exceptions of some “like us” who confirm the racist rule. Metaphors emphasize Their negative characteristics, beginning with the representation of immigration as invasion, whereas euphemisms mitigate our negative ones, as is the case for the account of Our racism in terms of popular discontent. Several types of global discourse strategies and their local moves, such as disclaimers, combine positive self-presentation (“We are not racist...,” “We have no problems with immigrants...”) with immediately following and dominant negative other-presentation (“but...”).
- c. *Other structures*: Whereas the general structures of polarization may be observed in global and local meanings, also the other structures of text and talk may contribute to the racist representation of the others. Thus, multimodal media discourse may emphasize the negative properties of Them by prominent placement of articles on the front page, large headlines, pictures, and cartoons. They may do so by active sentences focusing on Their negative actions, and passive sentence hiding Ours. The general system of limited access to public discourse is specifically detrimental for members of minority groups, both as sources of news as well as for minority journalists. Hence, if at all, the Others and their organizations and spokespersons will seldom be cited, and if so, in a negative or cautious way, using double quotes to emphasize the controversial or unreliable nature of their evidence or the doubtful nature of their opinions.

Obviously, this is only a brief summary of the many findings of 30 years of research in our own project as well as many others that have been started worldwide on discourse and racism. Each of the findings on the structures of discourse need to be specified for the different national and communicative contexts and genres studied. News and editorials have different structures than parliamentary debates and textbooks, mainly depending on the goals and functions of these discourse types in society, and the same is true for the ways they express and reproduce racist prejudices. Whereas much (though not all!) parliamentary debates today may be cautious with their negative characterization of immigrants and minorities, the right-wing press or Internet sites may be very adamant and explicit. It is therefore crucial to always take into account the context of discourse in order to make reliable conclusions about their racist nature.

## ***2.4 Racism and Colonialism: Racism and Discourse in Latin America***

Our project has focused on “white,” European, racism, and its discourses. Obviously, such racism has its historical roots as well as its role outside of Europe. Earlier, it served as the legitimation of slavery and colonialism. Today, it serves to “curb” immigration, especially from the South to the North, on the one hand, and to control immigrants and minorities once established in the North.

Our research has repeatedly found parallels between various kinds of racism and colonialism. First of all, both in the mass media as well as in textbooks, there is remarkable similarity between the representation of Others “here” with “Us,” as well as “over there” in the South. Trivially, this is first of all because the Others among us are typically from the South, in the first place. But more generally, we found that dominant discourse about Them, anytime, anywhere, stereotypically associated the Others with backwardness, traditionalism, primitiveness, intolerance, aggression (terrorism, etc.), and crime, and more generally not satisfying “Our” prominent norms and values.

Second, our research of discourse and racism in Latin America has shown that very similar patterns of racist text and talk characterize the symbolic elites of European descent; for instance, in political discourse, the mass media, textbooks, and everyday conversations. If colonialism has left its mark in Latin America, as well as more generally in the South, such is obvious not only in political structure and economic power but also in public discourse. This means, first of all, a general denial or ignorance of racism, and an emphasis on assumed “racial democracy,” especially in Brazil, even where blatant forms of racism against indigenous and African Latin peoples remain prevalent. Access to public discourse in politics, the mass media, and science is generally reserved for the elites of European descent. With some exceptions of prominent leaders, indigenous and black people seldom have a public voice. As soon as they claim and defend their rights, they are soon branded as terrorists, as is the case for the Mapuche in Chile and indigenous people in Mexico and elsewhere. People of African descent, as elsewhere, tend to be associated with various forms of deviance, crime or drugs, or at most with nondominant forms of culture (music, etc.)—and play subordinate roles in the ubiquitous telenovelas. If quotas are necessary, as in Brazil, to compensate for bad public education so that they are able to enter the elite universities, elite discourse, also on the Left, denounces them as reverse discrimination, while being an intolerable assault on white privilege. Beauty queens in Venezuela are seldom recruited among the African population. Whereas indigenous people elsewhere are small minorities (as in Brazil and Chile), when they are large minorities or majorities, as in Mexico and Bolivia, their rise to minimum forms of (formal) power is often accompanied by stereotypes and negative coverage, as is the case for dominant discourse about President Morales in Bolivia, or the official reactions against the Zapata uprising in Chiapas, Mexico.

These few examples not only show the obvious inequalities in the power structures between people of European descent and the others in Latin America, thus reproducing the structures established during colonialism, but also the dominant

discourses and ideologies that form the basis and the legitimation of ethnic domination. We are only beginning to chart the more detailed properties of such discourse in Latin America and hence as yet have only a very general picture of the way European racism and neocolonialism continue to be reproduced by such discourse throughout the world.

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# Discourse Markers in Oral Narrative

Neal R. Norrick

**Abstract** This chapter seeks to demonstrate that *well* and *but* function as a special sort of discourse marker (DM) in oral narratives, and that their functions within the oral narrative context follow neither from their usual meanings nor from their usual DM functions in other contexts. Instead, both *well* and *but* are keyed on participant expectations about narrative structures and storytelling procedures. Excerpts from conversational narratives will illustrate how *well* and *but* initiate and conclude narrative action, how they guide listeners back to the main sequence of narrative elements following interruptions and digressions, and how listeners can invoke *well* and *but* to reorient the primary teller to the expected order of narrative presentation.

If, as Fraser (1990, p. 383–395) says, DMs signal a sequential discourse relationship, then specifically narrative DMs provide particularly clear evidence of an independent DM function not related to any lexical meaning. The analysis of *well* and *but* in oral narrative shows that DMs enjoy specialized functions in this particular type of discourse due to its highly coded sequentiality and storytelling conventions.

**Keywords** Societal pragmatics · Conversation analysis · Narratives

## 1 Introduction

It is the purpose of this chapter to explore the specifically narrative functions of the discourse markers (DMs) *well* and *but*. I hope to show that *well* and *but* fulfill particular functions in oral narrative which follow neither from the lexical senses of these two words nor from their usual DM functions. Instead, the functions of both *well* and *but* in oral narrative reflect expectations about the structures and conventions of storytelling.

Minami (1998) demonstrates that Japanese storytellers employ particular linguistic devices as specifically narrative DMs keyed on the verse/stanza organization

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of Japanese oral personal narratives. My own recent work (Norrick 1998a, b) shows that oral storytellers strategically deploy disfluencies, repetition, and formulaicity to mark specific narrative elements and transitions. The research on *well* and *but* reported below represents a further step toward an account of specifically narrative functions of DMs.

As an initial example, consider Twain's use of *well* as a DM of the intended kind to lend verisimilitude to the oral narrative technique of a traditional storyteller in "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." After an extended introduction with several narrative digressions of its own, the teller finally introduces the story of the jumping frog as follows:

...It always makes me feel sorry when I think of that last fight of his'n, and the way it turned out.

*Well*, thish-yer Smiley had rat-tarriers, and chicken cocks, and tom-cats and all them kind of things, till you couldn't rest.

Twain's raconteur begins a second story exactly the same way, as his listener is leaving:

...he buttonholed me and recommenced:

"*Well*, thish-yer Smiley had a yaller one-eyed cow that didn't have no tail.

In these two parallel passages, *well* serves as a DM signaling the beginning of a story following a digression or interruption. Transcriptions of recorded oral narratives exhibit these DM functions and related ones for both *well* and *but*, as we will see below.

DMs, according to Fraser (1990, 1996), are pragmatic markers which provide a commentary on the following utterance; that is they lead off an utterance and indicate how the speaker intends its basic message to relate to the prior discourse. Hence, DMs signal a sequential discourse relationship. Many DMs are ambiguous due to homophony with a lexical item representing a traditional part of speech, though their functions as DMs do not follow from the sense of the homophonous lexical items in any linear way. In the case of *well*, this would mean that the DM function is unrelated to any of the adjectival or adverbial meanings; in the case of *but*, it would mean that the DM function would not bear any necessary connection to the adversative meaning of the adverbial conjunct. DMs orient listeners, but they do not create meaning; therefore, DMs can be deleted with no loss of meaning, though the force of the utterance will be less clear. In realizing sequentially determined functions obviously distinct from the meanings of their homophonous lexical counterparts, as traditionally described, narrative DMs provide particularly clear evidence of an independent DM function.

Schourup (1985), Schiffirin (1987), Fraser (1988), and others posit a core meaning for each DM with local context explaining the range of functions. Now, the local context includes how participants identify the type of talk exchange in progress; and storytelling is a type of talk with its own structural conventions and interactional relevance. Storytelling differs significantly from regular turn-by-turn conversation in its sequential implications, so that we might expect it to invest DMs with special organizational functions not found in other forms of talk. Past research, however,

has tended to focus on the give-and-take of everyday talk. In turn-by-turn conversation, *well* at the head of a response signals hesitation due to a contribution somehow inconsistent with the foregoing discourse. When *but* initiates a response, it signals contrast or cancels some feature of the foregoing discourse. In oral storytelling, however, both *well* and *but* can introduce the initial expository section to set the action in motion as well as mark transitions to succeeding sections, including the final summary of a story. Moreover, *well* and *but* fulfill essentially the same narrative functions, despite the differences attributed to them in other types of discourse. Thus, I view them as DMs keyed on expectations about the organization of a narrative in progress.

In conversational narratives generally, *well* and *but* are oriented toward furthering the main action and formulating the point of the story. Besides initiating and concluding the narrative action, *well* and *but* can recall listener attention to the developing plot or the point of a story. Even a listener can take advantage of this narrative DM function of *well* and *but* to elicit a statement of a story's resolution or point from the primary teller, as we will see.

I will begin with a consideration of *well*, because its DM status is more obviously independent of its lexical senses, then move on to *but*, which seems more problematic, illustrating its particularly narrative DM functions more copiously.

## 2 *Well* as a Discourse Marker

As suggested by the citations from Twain above, *well* routinely fulfills discourse functions independent of its lexical meanings of “healthy” in (1), “admirably” in (2), and “substantially” in (3):

- (1) Judy has not been well lately.
- (2) Judy has played well lately.
- (3) Judy is well on her way to improvement.

The usual dialogic functions identified for *well* as a DM are to preface utterances which reject, cancel, or disagree with the content or tenor of the foregoing discourse (see Lakoff 1973; Svartvik 1980; Owen 1983; Pomerantz 1984; Schiffrin 1987). In this function, *well* serves as a left-hand discourse bracket, as described by Watts (1989). According to Schourup (1985), speakers use *well* as an “evincive,” indicating that they are consulting their own thoughts and producing a response insufficient in some way. Schiffrin (1987) expresses roughly the same point in writing that *well* signals that the speaker is “deferring” the full content of the response. Thus, *well* goes hand in hand with speaker hesitation and an implication that the following contribution is undesirable or inadequate in some way; for instance, in the direct denial in the initial conversational passage below.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise specified, examples are cited from my own corpus of audio-taped conversation. All the stories cited in the text, along with a growing number of other transcribed conversational

Jacob: Then I talked him into  
writing a letter to Donna.  
I knew he'd never do it,  
on his own.

Erik: Sober.

Jacob: Yeah,  
*well*, no,  
I knew he'd just never do it,  
plain, y'know, do it, on his own.

Similarly, *well* may signal rejection of a presupposition made by another speaker:

Yvonne: Did you defeat the purpose? {laughing}

Tom: *Well*, the purpose was,  
maybe at the time just a medium.

When *well* is used by a single speaker to continue, it often introduces an explanatory comment, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976). Watts (1989, p. 224) describes a similar same-speaker bridging use of *well* as a "cohesive topical link on a metalinguistic level." In a special case of this function, *well* cancels a foregoing assertion in order to perform a self-correction, as in the excerpt below.

Tom: Was that just last night?  
No it was not,  
well, yeah it was,  
[I was just, I was in the mood for,]

Sybil: [You wanted something fresh and crispy,]

Lakoff (1973) claims that a single speaker may employ *well* to signal narrative elision, as in her example:

...he asked him, "How can I get the silver screw out of my bellybutton?" *Well*, to make a long story short, the witch doctor...

However, as Schourup (1985) points out, it is the phrase "to make a long story short" that signals elision here, not the DM *well*. Schourup goes on to claim that *well* realizes evincive function here, signaling that the speaker is consulting uncommunicated thoughts; but this interpretation takes us no further, since it, too, is redundant given the summarizing effect of "to make a long story short." More to the point is the simple recognition that *well* is oriented to the main action or point of the story in progress. Svartvik (1980) comes close to this analysis with his "topic-shifting function," whereby *well* closes preceding discourse and focuses on following discourse.

If we specify that the topic shift is keyed to narrative organization, then it even seems to account for *well* to introduce new stories and new episodes, as in the Twain citations above. Precisely this orientation on narrative organization makes up the

central tenet of the analysis presented below. This last function comes closest to the switch marked by *well* in narratives, where the teller segues back into a story from a digression or interruption.

### 3 *Well* as a Specifically Narrative Discourse Marker

In this section, I will present examples of *well* in spoken narratives which go beyond the descriptions of *well* as a lexical item or DM or the nonnarrative types described so far. For present purposes, we can assume that storytellers and their audiences orient themselves to a narrative framework like that proposed by Labov and Waletzky (1967) and Labov (1972), according to which a narrative consists of six principal parts:

- a. An abstract which identifies the point or summarizes the action of the story
- b. An orientation which provides general background information and describes the particular circumstances of the action
- c. The complicating action reported in sequential order
- d. The result or resolution of the action
- e. A final coda to close the story, often relating it to the current context
- f. Evaluation at various points to guide the audience to the intended point of through the narrative

Consider first a conversational example of *well* used as an organizational DM to signal the beginning of a story. This is the same function we saw in the passages cited from Twain's "Notorious Jumping Frog" above.

- A: something I want to go back to.  
 I acquired an absolutely magnificent sewing machine  
 by foul means.  
 Did I tell you about that?
- B: No.
- A: *Well* when I was doing freelance advertising,  
 the advertising agency  
 that I sometimes did some work for  
 rang me

In this passage adapted from the London-Lund Corpus (Svartvik and Quirk 1980, p. 84), *well* serves to introduce the first expository clause and full narrative clause of a story, following the abstract in the sense of Labov and Waletzky (1967). Once the teller gets a confirmation that the story is new to her listener, she begins the narrative proper with *well*. Far from cancelling or denying the information in the abstract, *well* carries the promised story forward. Thus, it signals a primary element of the story line, setting it off from digressions, interruptions, and topical turn-by-turn talk. This same basic functional description also applies to the uses of *well* to be treated below.

Consider also how *well* can signal the beginning of a new episode, as in the passage from DOG STORY below. Notice that *well* heads up an expression of how much time has passed in order to provide a frame for the new set of complicating actions to come. Complete transcripts of DOG STORY and all the other excerpts cited from my database appear in the Appendix 2 to this chapter.

Tammy: So my dad crated-up these two  
 beautifully little matched puppies  
 and shipped them from Missouri to Florida,  
 to this man.  
 And reminded him,  
 “be sure you chain the puppies up.”  
*Well* about, seven eight months later,  
 here those two dogs return to Missouri.

The teller Tammy employs *well* to bridge the time lapse between the shipping of the dogs and their return home. In this way, she keys *well* on the expected organization of the narrative in progress. One might claim that *well* signals a cancellation of the action in Florida and returns the listeners’ attention to Missouri, but this interpretation itself seems oriented toward the expected narrative structure of the tale being told.

In parallel fashion, *well* may be oriented toward the end of an oral narrative as a summary coda in the sense of Labov and Waletzky (1967). In the passage from EXPOSING below, Jim closes by formulating the point in a clause prefaced with *well*. The excerpt represents the final chunk of a longish story about playing doctor and patient as a child.

Pamela: It sure is nice to have a boy and a girl  
 I tell you  
 Teddy: Yeah, yeah.  
 Jim: Yeah.  
 Vera: {laughs}  
 Pamela: We won’t have to show them anything.  
 Jim: [Right right.]  
 Vera: [That’s right.]  
 Jim: Well I think y’know  
 here were two sisters  
 who didn’t have a brother  
 and two brothers who didn’t have a sister  
 and I think the idea was an exchange of [a kind]  
 Vera: [You were] being an educator.  
 Jim: Yeah.

*Well* not only summarizes the point of the story from Jim’s perspective, it even takes into account the comments about boy and girl siblings by Pamela and Vera, so that it can hardly be said to signal a cancellation or denial of the foregoing discourse. If we

insist that *well* must express a cancellation or denial of some kind, then we can note that it ends speculations about the desirability of different-sex siblings and moves to the summary coda, and thus it represents the next step expected in the dynamic narrative organization. But this amounts to saying that the most appropriate description of *well* involves its function as a DM keyed on a narrative organization in which a coda follows the resolution of the action.

### 3.1 *Well to return to the main theme of a story*

Besides leading into beginnings and endings of oral narratives, *well* also regularly serves to reestablish the main story line or theme following digressions and interruptions. This function perhaps differs least from the nonnarrative potential of *well* to signal hesitation and to reject, cancel, or disagree with the content or tenor of the foregoing discourse, as described by earlier writers. Nevertheless, this sequential use of *well* is clearly similar to the foregoing functions described, which are keyed on dynamic narrative organization to a greater degree than on any adversative sense.

In the next example CHIPMUNK, Patricia uses *well* to move from the dialogue about who believed what back into the main story line.

Amy: it was twice.  
and the first time,  
“there’s a rat in there,  
there’s a big mouse in there.  
I saw it.”

Marsha: {laughs}

Amy: “no, there’s nothing in there.”  
“yes, I saw it.”

Marsha: I wouldn’t believe her.

Patricia: *well* I went out.  
remember,  
and set the bag—  
it was a bag of *cans*.  
that was when we were looking for the golf ball,  
cause you hit the ball in the can.

Patricia’s description of the events surrounding the discovery of the chipmunk serves primarily to clarify the event, rather than to cancel or reject the story as related by Amy to this point. Indeed, Patricia seems primarily concerned with recording the story’s main complicating action in the sense of Labov and Waletzky. At the same time, however, Patricia cements her role as a co-narrator and makes a bid to switch the story perspective to her own. Thus, if *well* cancels anything here, it can only be Amy’s perspective on the events in favor of Patricia’s. From Patricia’s point of view, *well* must serve to lead back into the main story following inconsequential

comments by Amy and Mary, so that *well* functions here again as a DM keyed on narrative organization.

### 3.2 *Well from listener for problems in story organization*

Tellers can only successfully employ DMs keyed to features of narrative organization and performance, if the other participants listen for them and interpret them properly. Of course, if tellers use DMs to direct listener attention to the organization of the narrative in progress, then the other participants may also have recourse to DMs to call attention to organizational problems. In the example below, a listener does just this, invoking *well* to mark an attempt to finish up a floundering story.

In the previous example, we saw how a co-narrator employed *well* to return a story to its main complicating action. In the passage below from the story entitled SPIN OUT, a listener similarly exploits the narrative DM function of *well* to formulate the point of Marsha's story and thereby produce an acceptable coda. Marsha has been telling and retelling the story of an automobile accident from the previous night, apparently trying to work through it herself, while her mother, Patricia, seems to desire clear closure.

Marsha: and then he said he was coming over.  
           he said "I can't get it out of my mind."  
           he said "I just keep playing it  
           over and over and over in my mind."  
           he said "I can't get it out."  
           and he doesn't remember too much about it.

Patricia: you never do,  
           because it takes seconds for it to happen.

Marsha: he—I can—  
           he fought the car for a good ten, fifteen seconds  
           before we lost total control.

Patricia: well the only thing you can both say  
           is thank God you're safe.  
           that's all.

Patricia seems to be attempting a kind of coda with her statement "You never do, because it takes seconds for it to happen," but Mary continues, contradicting Patricia's claims about memory and time. Then Patricia uses *well* to preface a very final-sounding judgment, and even tacks on "That's all" to make it quite clear she intends her statement as a coda.

Thus, we have seen that listeners, too, can appeal to *well* to mark utterances addressed to the form and meaning of narratives. If *well* acts as a specifically narrative DM keyed on expectations about the organization of stories, then it is available for use by both tellers and listeners.

#### 4 *But* as a Conjunct and a Discourse Marker

In this section, I will first illustrate some typical “core” cases of *but* in its connective and contrastive uses, in order to set the stage for my description of its specifically narrative functions. As a contrastive adverbial conjunct in the terminology of Quirk et al. (1985) or an “adversative conjunctive element” in that of Halliday and Hasan (1976), *but* has a range of meanings variously described as adversative or antithetic, as in (4), concessive, as in (5), corrective or replacive, as in (6), and dismissive, as in (7):

- (4) Judy expected to win gold, but got only silver.
- (5) She had little chance of winning, but it was worth a try.
- (6) Judy didn’t exactly fall down, but she tripped.
- (7) Judy was quite disappointed, but it doesn’t matter.

In its clear DM functions, *but* signals contrast or a “denial of expectations” (Foolen 1991). The contrast may be lexically expressed, as in (8), or it may be inferred from the content of the preceding discourse, as in (9):

- (8) Larry is big. But his daughter is small.
- (9) Larry is big. But he’s not good at basketball.

Dascal and Katriel (1977) and Katriel and Dascal (1984) describe the function of *but* as cancelling some level of meaning in the foregoing utterance. As Bell (1998) shows, the levels of meaning may be ideational, rhetorical, or sequential; indeed, *but* may cancel meaning in the previous utterance on more than one of these levels at once. Thus, the function of *but* in the passage below could arguably be both ideational and rhetorical: ideational in shifting from Astrid to her husband Keith, and rhetorical in switching the topic of conversation from greeting Astrid to seeing Keith waiting tables.

Brianne: Did Astrid say hi to you  
or anything like that?

Addie: No, I kind of avoided her  
and she didn’t see me.  
*But* he was there, serv—  
Keith was serving.

The notion that *but* cancels meanings developed in the preceding discourse provides a natural explanation for the next passage, again adapted from Svartvik and Quirk (1980, p. 664). Here the speaker uses *but* to cancel the contradiction he has produced and to clear the way for his rather lengthy clarification, apparently prodded by his hearer’s repeated questioning.

B: it was in the middle of this Dubrovnik Garden.  
which is a very overgrown kind of a garden.  
I mean it’s not overgrown.  
A: Yeah?



- B: *but* things start off.  
 with plenty of space between them.  
 on the ground.
- A: Yes?
- B: but when they get up to the sort of foliage level.
- A: {laughs}
- B: they're all sort of interlinked.

Notice that *but* serves to cancel out the contradiction as a whole. It certainly does not cancel the immediately preceding statement that "it's not overgrown," which in fact jibes with the assertion of "plenty of space." Of course, this latter assertion redundantly cancels the initial claim that the garden is overgrown, which was already denied in the second half of the contradiction. Thus, the force of *but* here must be to cancel the contradiction, preparing the way for some sort of resolution.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) further identify an "internal" adversative meaning "contrary to expectation" directed at the ongoing communication process. Similar is Schiffrin's (1987) description of a "speaker-return" from secondary to primary information, or alternatively to cancel the topic domain of the foregoing discourse in favor of a new perspective. Bell (1998) calls this function of *but* sequentially contrastive, saying that it cancels expectations about what should come next in the discourse. In this sequential function, *but* marks off a digression or other subordinate section of a discourse and signals a return to its main topic or point, as in the following example from Bell (1998, p. 530).

Suddenly, his telephone is ringing with producers interested in his next project.  
*But* what most delights him  
 is that Americans will see his film.

The function of *but* to signal a shift in voice here and to segue into a new perspective is similar to the particularly narrative functions I will identify for *but* below. In both cases, *but* as a DM is keyed to the organization of the ongoing discourse.

## 5 *But* as a Specifically Narrative Discourse Marker

I will proceed here as in the description of narrative DM functions of *well*, citing examples of *but* in spoken narratives which do not fit the descriptions of *but* as a contrastive adverbial conjunct or DM. Again assuming that storytellers and their audiences orient themselves to a Labovian narrative framework, let us consider an excerpt from Labov and Waletzky (1967, pp. 16–17, 23–27), where *but* introduces the first expository clause in a story, immediately following the abstract. Once the teller has established the background for his story with a general frame "I was in the boy scouts at the time" and a particular frame for the action "we was doing the 50-yard dash, racing," he begins the orientation with a clause introduced by *but*.

yeh I was in the boy scouts at the time  
 and we was doing the 50-yard dash

racing  
*but* we was at the pier, marked off  
 and so we was doing the 50-yard dash  
 there was about eight or ten of us, you know,  
 going down, coming back

Far from expressing contrast of any kind or cancelling the background information in the preceding clauses, *but* instead ratifies and builds on this information. *But* seems to fulfill our expectations of where a swimming race would take place rather than to deny them. Nor, in this narrative context, can *but* establish a contrast between a digression or other subordinate section of a discourse and its main topic or point, as Halliday and Hasan (1976), Schiffrin (1987), and Bell (1998) require for sequential contrast.

The simplest description of *but* in the passage above is that it is keyed on the narrative structure in which an orientation follows an initial abstract, so that it marks the next step in the narrative structure. Like *well*, *but* functions as a specialized organizational DM in the context of the oral narrative. If the description absolutely must contain some notion of contrast or adversity for purposes of consistency, we might say that the use of *but* in this way conveys the contrastive information that the completed prefatory abstract must give way to the initial exposition of the narrative in the orientation.

For a second example of *but* used as an organizational DM to begin a story, consider the passage below—again adapted from Svartvik and Quirk (1980, p. 343)—in which *but* segues from the orientation section to the main complicating action of a conversational narrative.

- B: And they were  
 I think because of the disgrace of it all,  
 they were going to move to Spain  
 where they'd built themselves  
 this grand house in Spain.  
*But* apparently  
 you uh they spent uh when it was finished  
 they went out there to spend a winter there  
 and they found they were so bored  
 cos all the other English people  
 did nothing but play golf and uh drink
- A: m
- B: that they came back after a month.  
 They said "Well it's all right for a winter holiday,"  
 cos they're very active people

Following the background information about the family disgrace and the house in Spain, *but* introduces the first attempt at a genuine narrative clause with *spent*. Although the teller breaks off and reformulates the whole initial clause, the complicating action finally begins to move and the story takes shape.

Here again *but* lacks any obvious adversative, contrastive, or cancellative force. Instead, it represents the obvious next step expected in the dynamic narrative organization; and again the most appropriate description of *but* must be in terms of its function as a DM keyed on the narrative structure in which the complicating action follows an orientation section.

As was the case for *well*, *but* can be directed toward the end of an oral narrative as a summary coda. Consider as evidence the passage from SPADE below, representing the last third of a conversational narrative, which Woody closes by formulating the humorous point in a clause initiated by *but um*. The extension of *but* in this function as *but um* or *but uh* is fairly common in the oral narrative data I have investigated. In extending *but*, tellers perhaps seek to augment the length and significance of the DM.

- Woody:           he had to have been twenty-five thirty yards away,  
                    and Paul w-went back with the shovel,  
                    hurled it.  
                    I mean y'know just threw it.
- Grant, Ginger: {laugh}
- Woody:           and I mean what is the likelihood of that thing—  
                    that damn shovel came right down on [his *head*.]
- Grant, Ginger: {laugh}
- Woody:           I mean-I mean it came down and it *flattened* him. {Woody punctu-  
                    ates with hand clap}  
                    I mean he fell flat on the ground.  
                    I mean he had a rip in the back of his head,
- Grant:           o-oh
- Woody:           and he thought he was dead.  
                    and of course he wasn't.  
                    he was just knocked-out a little bit  
                    and had a nasty concussion  
                    and so on and so forth.  
                    but um, I mean  
                    who would have thought that that shovel  
                    and that boy  
                    would have connected at that distance.

Now, certainly a formulation of the main point or summary of a foregoing narrative cannot express contrast or cancellation in any normal sense. Halliday and Hasan (1976) could perhaps identify a meaning “contrary to expectation” at the particular point reached in the text, though a coda is precisely what we should expect according to Labov and Waletzky. Schiffrin (1987) might argue that this use of *but* presents a functional contrast and “creates an anaphoric tie” (165) to an earlier point in the text. Similarly, Bell (1998) might say, following Dascal and Katriel (1977) and Katriel and Dascal (1984), that *but* picks out certain features of the foregoing discourse for cancellation, perhaps the presupposition that the teller would prefer

to detail the local effects rather than returning to the main point. However, it seems again that the correct description must involve reference to the story in progress and directedness toward its organization. In particular, *but* marks the significance statement which serves as the final step in the overall structure of the story. If one felt the description should make reference to the notion of contrast, as above, one could again appeal to the fact that the use of *but* in this way conveys the contrastive information that the complicating action in the body of the narrative here gives way to the coda or final expression of the point of the story.

In the foregoing example, SPADE, *but* (in the extended form *but um*) marked the formulation of the main point of a narrative as its coda, while in the excerpt BASKETBALL below, *but um* marks the resolution of the narrative under construction. Again the passage represents the final third of a conversational narrative, which the teller seeks to close with a statement of relevance.

Audrey: {laughing} So, so I went I went in,  
 and I had the ball,  
 and I just like turned around  
 and I shot it—  
 didn't even look  
 and it like hit off the backboard so hard.  
 It was so bad  
 like it I could just like like—  
 it was just so embarrassing.

Lana: Oh Audrey.

Audrey: But, um,  
 I know like it all just paid off  
 because my Senior Year  
 I'd never done so well in anything.  
 And I got a lot of offers  
 to play at schools and—

Lana: And you decided not to?

Audrey: No because,  
 my like,  
 my whole—  
 I don't know why  
 but my whole life was geared to like college.  
 I could not wait to go to college.  
 And to go to a small college,

Lana: Right, right, right.

A successful statement of relevance can hardly contrast on any higher level of meaning with the preceding discourse, though we might well expect contrasts and/or cancellations on lower levels. Thus, one might say that *but* marks a contrast between the detail level in the foregoing turn to the general level of the final turn. But even in this formulation, we perceive an orientation to the function of *but* in relation to the organization of the ongoing narrative.

### 5.1 *But to Return to the Main Theme of a Story*

The use of *but* to signal a return to the main point or action of a story again parallels *well*. This third DM function of *but* in oral narrative most closely approximates the sequentially contrastive functions identified by earlier writers. By introducing it after the two others, I hope to more clearly show how this function, too, is keyed on the dynamic narrative organization over and above any contrastive functions.

In her story PATCHED WASHCLOTHS, Lydia twice uses *but* to lead back into her story after interruptions by others, the first time to introduce background information as part of the orientation, and the second time to express evaluation through direct appeal to one of her listeners.

- Lydia: well see I said  
if you grew up in a house  
where your mother [patched washcloths].
- Ned: [remember darning, Sherry?]
- Sherry: I was going—  
“what are *darned* dish towels.”
- Ned: well.  
it’s when you don’t want to say  
*damn* dish towels.  
{General laughter}  
don’t *you* call that process darning?
- Lydia: but my mother just  
put them under the sewing machine  
and took two washcloths and made one.  
and patched the middle of a washcloth  
when it was worn out.
- Ned: your mother didn’t invent that. {laughing}
- Lydia: and I said  
when you grow up like *that*  
it’s hard to get with this world  
that throws things away.
- Claire: {arriving} here are darned dish towels.
- Sherry: {laughing} *darned* dish towels.
- Lydia: *but* were you ever embarrassed, Claire?  
when you invited *friends* to your house,  
did you ever have to be embarrassed?  
I was embarrassed  
when the girls from town came.  
{Laughter from Sherry, Brandon, and others}
- Ned: our mother was embarrassed?
- Lydia: and saw *my* mother’s patched washcloths.  
I tried to hide them really fast.

Just as *but* leads back to the main story line following a listener interruption, so may *but* serve to bridge the teller's own digression. For example, in the next excerpt (adapted from Svartvik and Quirk 1980, pp. 91–92), *um but* returns attention to the main story after a digression by the primary teller herself. Such *buts* might be said to contrast with or cancel the digression, but even then the recognition of certain phrases and exchanges as constituting digressions vis-à-vis the main story line again depends on an adjustment to the dynamic development of the narrative in progress.

- A: the um lunch was all right  
 lun-lunch was fairly civilized  
 except that I don't know if you can imagine  
 having lunch at high table  
 in a college  
 um an hour before you've got an interview
- b: m
- A: I mean normally I don't eat for three days  
 [before an interview]
- c: [yes]
- b, c: {laugh}
- A: *um but* I you lunch one just sort of went into  
 and there were all the undergraduates  
 at these long tables eating  
 and then you clambered up on the platform  
 and you took
- b: m
- A: something from a side table  
 and you ate it  
 and y—when you finished you went away  
 and there was no formality

Notice the trouble the teller has in determining her perspective, shifting from *I* to *you* and then to *one*, presumably because she was not sure whether or not she was still in the scenario introduced by “I don't know if you can imagine” in the turn preceding the digression (though she moves back to *you* fairly rapidly). These moves, too, reflect a keying to the ongoing narrative performance and to narrative conventions generally.

## 5.2 *But from Listener for Problems in Story Organization*

As we saw above with *well*, listeners can turn the tables on storytellers, using DMs to draw attention to the organization of the narrative in progress. In the two passages below, listeners resort to the DM *but* to ask questions leading back to the main story line.

In the next excerpt from ACCIDENTS, Mark exploits the narrative DM function of *but* to induce Jacob to return to the expected organizational sequence. When Jacob says “You met her,” it sounds as if he were already establishing present relevance as in a coda before producing a proper result or resolution. Mark’s question about what happened is perfectly formulated to guide Jacob back to the expected result or resolution—though it appears Mark does not possess the information necessary to complete the story.

Jacob: you know what happened to my aunt Florence  
when she was a little girl?

Mark: ooh what happened.

Jacob: she was like screwing around  
like around Christmas time?  
and like she,  
I-I guess this was like  
when they had candles on trees?  
she lit her hair on fire.

Mark: oh wow.

Jacob: you met her.

Mark: *but* did anything happen?  
she get a burned head or something?

Jacob: uh I don’t know,  
maybe you could shave her  
and look for scar tissue.

Mark: oh I don’t want to shave your aunt Florence’s head.

If *but* serves to mark contrast or to cancel any previous meaning or presupposition in this passage, it could only be the assumption that the story will end without a result or resolution. Saying that *but* signals the shift from one speaker to the other, or from narrative to questioning the narrative, either begs the question or misses the point. Clearly, it is more adequate to say that *but* serves to direct the teller back to the orderly presentation of the story.

In my final example, again taken from the end of a longer story in the London-Lund Corpus (Svartvik and Quirk 1980, pp. 339–340), the teller tacks an additional unexpected observation onto an apparent coda, thereby muddling the point of the narrative for the listeners. At first, the teller seems to be concluding a story about guests at a ball dancing with their winter outerwear on, then he shifts the focus to the effects of the fires in the ballroom, suggesting that he and his partner suffered for their failure to dress warmly enough. Either the clause about the clothing or the clause about the fires and their effects might serve as an appropriate coda to the story in the conversational context, so that one of the listeners formulates a request for the teller to clarify the point of the story, of course initiated with the DM *but*. It is particularly noteworthy, I believe, that both the listener who requested clarification and a second listener as well provide audible back channels—three in all—while the teller seeks to acquit himself for his failure to properly conclude his story.

- A: in this vast ballroom  
 uh of the hotel we happened to be in  
 they were having a Christmas Eve dance.  
 It's the only time I've ever seen people  
 at a Christmas Eve dance  
 wearing gloves and fur coats fur hats.  
 And there were three enormous fires in the room  
 which if you were within ten feet of them  
 you singed  
 but fifteen feet away from them  
 it was uh perishing.
- B: *um but* did you not know it was going to be so cold and you had no fur gloves  
 and fur hats  
 and things with you  
 so you nearly died of the cold?
- A: no we'd we'd got clo—uh warm clothes with us  
 cos we knew,  
 no it was just surprising that
- B: m
- C: m
- B: m
- A: where I say it was a  
 a dance going on  
 with people wearing gloves

The listeners in this passage certainly give the impression of applying pressure on the teller to produce a narrative in the expected order with an unambiguous point; and the teller is at pains to obliterate the unintended inference and to reinforce the image of couples dancing at a ball wearing coats, hats, and gloves. Apparently, once the teller has expressed the coda of a story, no related point may rival it until the audience has responded. Since tellers and listeners recognize the function of *but* as a narrative DM keyed on the organization of stories, both can have recourse to *but* to mark utterances expressing their concern with the form and meaning of narratives.

## Conclusions

The most immediate conclusion is that both *well* and *but* function as a special sort of DM within the oral narrative context. In fact, the two DMs are surprisingly similar in their specifically narrative applications. In particular, I have argued that both *well* and *but* are keyed on participant expectations about narrative structures and story-telling procedures. I presented excerpts from conversational narratives, showing (1) how *well* and *but* segue from an abstract to an orientation and from the complicating action to a coda and a result or resolution, (2) how *well* and *but* guide listeners back



to the main sequence of narrative elements following interruptions and digressions, and (3) how listeners can invoke *well* and *but* in a parallel way to reorient the primary teller to the expected order of narrative presentation.

More generally, we have seen that DMs can have specialized functions in one particular type of discourse. Since the sequentiality of storytelling differs from that of greetings, question–answer sequences, arguments, and other genres of talk, certainly the functions of DMs like *well* and *but* should differ accordingly. I feel that Schiffrin’s (1987) description of *well* and *but* in conversation and *so* and *because* in narrative structure clearly lead to this conclusion as well, though she apparently never claimed as much explicitly, perhaps because it detracts from her goal of offering the most general treatment possible of the individual DMs. It seems to me that local sequential determination bound to particular discourse types offers the most compelling evidence available that DMs are genuine *pragmatic* markers à la Fraser (1990) with functions independent of the lexical readings traditionally assigned to them. As Schiffrin puts it in her own definition (1987, p. 31), DMs are “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk.” Indeed, as I hope to have demonstrated, DMs in oral narratives are elements dependent upon expectations about story structures and conventions, and they bracket appropriate units in accordance with the organizational conventions of this genre.

I suggest that we need more research on the local determination of DM functions in different narrative genres in different linguistic communities and storytelling traditions. We should expect to find not only sets of lexical items but also various other linguistic devices acting as DMs. And we should bear in mind that DMs serve not only to signal tellers’ intentions about particular utterances and overall organization but also as cues to audience expectations about the narrative in progress.

## Transcription Conventions

Each line of transcription contains a single intonation unit.

She’s out	Period shows falling tone in the preceding element.
Oh yeah?	Question mark shows rising tone in the preceding element.
well, okay	Comma indicates a continuing intonation, drawing out the preceding element.
<i>Damn</i>	Italics show heavy stress.
bu-but	A single dash indicates a cutoff with a glottal stop.
says “Oh”	Double quotes mark speech set off by a shift in the speaker’s voice.
[and so—]	Square brackets on successive lines mark
[Why] her?	beginning and end of overlapping talk.
and=	Equals signs on successive lines shows latching
= then	between turns.
(2.0)	Numbers in parentheses indicate timed pauses.
{sigh}	Curly braces enclose editorial comments and untranscribable elements.

## Appendix

Transcripts of stories from my corpus with notes on their settings and the participants appear below in the order they were treated in the body of the chapter. In each case, the passage cited above will be bolded.

### *Dog Story*

This story was elicited during the first session of a graduate seminar in English at a large midwestern American university. The students were asked to take turns telling stories until each had told two or three. The teller, whom I call Tammy, presented DOG STORY as her first contribution. Others had also related personal narratives, but otherwise no coherence with the context was evident.

Tammy: Well uh,  
 I've always had a a real interest—  
 intrigue, in fact  
 with the behavior of animals,  
 and and their unique ways of of logic.  
 And I guess I got that from my father,  
 who, whose family for generations have,  
 uh bred foxhounds  
 and, hunted with them  
 and showed them around the country.  
 And through those generations  
 they have a lot of networking,  
 around the the world,  
 really.  
 And, there was an instance  
 where I got a first hand experience  
 in seeing the remarkable nature of animal behavior. He ships puppies,  
 foxhounds all over the world. Argentina, England, all over.  
 And one time  
 this man from Florida wanted to buy a matched,  
 set of puppies.  
 And since I was, uh, off to college  
 and he needed the money,  
 he said, "okay,  
 but now I want you to know  
 that once you get 'em,  
 you have to keep 'em chained,  
 for at least six months.  
 Not just in a pen, chained."

Well, you know this fellow figured  
 he knew animal behavior pretty well,  
 so he wasn't going to worry about it.  
 So my dad crated-up these two  
 beautifully little matched puppies  
 and shipped them from Missouri to Florida,  
 to this man.  
 And reminded him,  
 "be sure you chain the puppies up."  
 Well about, seven eight months later,  
 here those two dogs return to Missouri.  
 The pads were worn off their feet.  
 They were haggard.  
 They were thin.  
 But somehow,  
 those puppies had managed  
 to get loose from their owner in Florida  
 and found their way back to the farm in Missouri, where they were born.  
 So I think animal behavior is fabulous.

### *Exposing*

This example comes from a set of six forty-five-minute segments recorded at the home of Pamela and Teddy with their invited dinner guests Vera and Jim. Vera and Jim are recently married and childless, while Pamela and Teddy have two children. Dinner and dessert are over, the kids are in bed, and the adults are all relating their own childhood memories. When the foursome broke into dyads of two men and two women, respectively, Vera overheard Jim mention a letter he wrote to a six-year-old girlfriend. Her question about the letter leads Jim to tell the story EXPOSING.

- Jim: In fact—  
 she was the daughter of the woman  
 who lived next door to my grandparents.
- Vera: {laughs}
- Jim: And er the couple, y'know.  
 So we had such fun as kids  
 and and it was she  
 and her sister  
 to whom I was exposing my brother's penis  
 when my—
- Teddy: {laughs}
- Vera: {laughing} I'm sure yeah.
- Jim: in the famous incident  
 when my grandmother broke in on us

- and *shamed* me for life.  
 Y'know really.  
 I'll never forget this tremendous weight of guilt.  
 And "*Jim* what are you *doing*."
- Teddy: {laughs}
- Jim: "Come out of there"  
 y'know "*Girls* go home"  
 and y'know.
- Pamela: Wow.
- Jim: Then I remember  
 just sitting in the living room  
 with my grandparents y'know pointedly ignoring me.
- Vera: Trying to act normally.
- Jim: And just y'know making me feel terrible.  
 And uh,
- Pamela: Oh.
- Teddy: {laughs}
- Vera: {laughs}
- Jim: But anyhow,
- Vera: He took them in the bathroom  
 and *showed* them his brother's.
- Pamela: Oh.
- Jim: {laughs}
- Vera: "*Look* what he's got."
- Jim: My brother didn't mind.
- Vera: Yeah {laughing}  
 His brother's younger than him.
- Pamela: Younger.  
 Oh I see.
- Jim: Yeah.
- Vera: {laughs}
- Jim: Uh but—
- Vera: {laughing} Poor kid.
- Pamela: Well.
- Vera: "It's a *visual aid*.  
 Here's my visual aid."
- Teddy: {laughing} Yes.  
 Show and tell.  
 Yeah.  
 "I'm bringing my brother's *genetalia*."
- Jim: {laughs}
- Vera: {laughs}
- Jim: {laughs}

- Pamela: It sure is nice to have a boy and a girl  
I tell you
- Teddy: Yeah, yeah.
- Jim: Yeah.
- Vera: {laughs}
- Pamela: We won't have to show them anything.
- Jim: [Right right.]
- Vera: [That's right.]
- Jim: Well I think y'know  
here were two sisters  
who didn't have a brother  
and two brothers who didn't have a sister  
and I think the idea was an exchange of [a kind]
- Vera: [You were] being an educator.
- Jim: Yeah.
- Teddy: Sure.
- Jim: But we were *rudely* interrupted and
- Vera: {laughs}
- Jim: So anyhow uh  
I just got to this cut-off point  
where suddenly  
I had to join the woman-haters' club.

### ***Chipmunk***

The participants in this and the next excerpt SPIN OUT are Patricia and Ralph, the parents of two college-age daughters Amy and Marsha, who are home for the long Thanksgiving break. The family has remained sitting at the kitchen table after supper. Patricia has been describing a party she attended where she related this same story for the amusement of outsiders, but here the story is told as one familiar to those present.

- Patricia: and I told the story  
about you and the little chipmunk  
out in the garage.
- Marsha: oh. {laughing}
- Amy: I kept—I kept—  
I was just thinking about that the other day.  
that thing scared the *heck* out of me.
- Patricia: with all with all the:
- Amy: it was twice.
- Marsha: {laughs}
- Amy: it was twice.  
and the first time,

- “there’s a rat in there,  
there’s a big mouse in there.  
I saw it.”
- Marsha: {laughs}
- Amy: “no, there’s nothing in there.”  
“yes, I *saw* it.”
- Marsha: I wouldn’t believe her.
- Patricia: well I went out.  
remember,  
and set the bag—  
it was a bag of *cans*.  
that was when we were looking for the golf ball,  
cause you hit the ball in the can.
- Amy: yeah and then you found its little cubby holes  
in a box or something.
- Patricia: well, what-what-
- Marsha: you found all the *seeds*, didn’t you?
- Patricia: all the seeds.
- Ralph: all the seeds in a plastic bag.
- Patricia: right by the wood out there.  
and when we moved the wood to clean it  
there was the whole thing.  
it must have sat against the wood  
and then ate all the {laughing} [sunflowers.]
- Ralph: [all the] sunflower seeds.  
all the shells were in [the bag.]
- Patricia: [there were] shells everywhere.
- Amy: yeah and you guys wouldn’t believe me.
- Marsha: well I guess there was [something there.]
- Patricia: [well I didn’t] the first time  
but the second time I did.
- Amy: scared me both [times.] {laughing}
- Marsha: {laughs}
- Amy: and of course it happened to me.  
you know, nobody else.
- Patricia: little sucker was living in the garage
- Ralph: living it up.  
[and living high on the hog.]
- Patricia: [had it made.]  
he was in out of the cold  
and he had something to eat.  
and, and by the way,  
we have to get a bird feeder.  
I’ll have to talk to ma  
and go to that Audubon place.

*Spin Out*

Same participants and setting as previous story.

- Ralph: so how many cars spun out there,  
[counting you.]
- Marsha: [three.]  
three while we were there. (2.0)  
and Brad says  
“that’s the only thing I have in my defense  
that I wasn’t driving too fast.”
- Amy: yeah that’s probably the only thing  
that’s keeping him,
- Marsha: because he does,  
he blames himself because—
- Patricia: oh, it’s so foolish to blame yourself  
and think about it afterwards.  
it happened.  
it’s over.
- Marsha: and then he said he was coming over.  
he said “I can’t get it out of my mind.”  
he said “I just keep playing it  
over and over and over in my mind.”  
he said “I can’t get it out.”  
and he doesn’t remember too much about it.
- Patricia: you never do,  
because it takes *seconds* for it to happen.
- Marsha: he—I can—  
he fought the car for a good ten, fifteen seconds  
before we lost total control.
- Patricia: well the only thing you can both say  
is thank God you’re safe.  
that’s all.
- Amy: did he hit the brakes at all?
- Marsha: no.  
he didn’t touch the brakes.
- Amy: now see what—
- Patricia: that’s where I make *my* mistake.
- Amy: see, I slid a couple times  
but I *pumped* the brakes.  
that one time, I was coming down a *hill*.  
and there was a car stopped at a red-light.  
and when I hit the brakes the *first* time,  
I slid.  
and I was only less than a car-length away from him,

so I just started *slamming* them down.  
and I stopped within inches of his bumper.

Ralph: that doesn't do any good.

slamming them down isn't going to do you any good. you're going to—

Amy: yeah but it was=

Ralph: =it's going to throw you into another skid.

Amy: yeah, but it was pumping them  
and it got me *stopped*.

I mean,

as long as I didn't hit him into the intersection.

## *Spade*

Several graduate students at a large midwestern American university are sitting around a seminar table after class. They have been telling stories about funny incidents from the past.

Woody: yeah I mean the most hilarious thing I ever saw  
as a kid growing up  
was in sixth or seventh grade.  
in sixth or seventh grade  
we lived outside of uh Philadelphia.  
and these two brothers lived across the street.  
Mark and Paul Tulano.  
and they were very loud very Italian young men.  
they were in fifth and sixth grade at the time.  
and uh they were always fighting  
about one thing or another.  
well Paul, my friend,  
uh got stuck with uh digging up the garden  
in the back of the yard with a spade.  
and Mark kept coming around uh to tease him.  
to tease Paul.  
and uh you know, Paul's working with a spade.  
and he says  
"if you don't leave  
I'm going to clunk you over the head,  
with this thing."  
and uh {cough} and Mark's saying  
"there's no way that you're going to be like that,  
because you you just won't do that stuff."  
"I will I will I will."  
so this guy started chasing him,  
kind of like like around the uh



the patch where the garden was.  
 and finally um uh uh his—the younger brother—  
 uh Mark just ran off.  
 and uh he was—  
 he had to have been twenty-five thirty yards away,  
 and Paul w-went back with the shovel,  
 hurled it.  
 I mean y'know just threw it.

Grant, Ginger: {laugh}

Woody: and I mean what is the likelihood of that thing—  
 that damn shovel came right down on [his *head*.]

Grant, Ginger: {laugh}

Woody: I mean-I mean it came down and it *flattened* him. {Woody punctu-  
 ates with hand clap}

I mean he fell flat on the ground.

I mean he had a rip in the back of his head,

Grant: o-oh

Woody: and he thought he was dead.

and of course he wasn't.

he was just knocked-out a little bit

and had a nasty concussion

and so on and so forth.

but um, I mean

who would have thought that that shovel

and that boy

would have connected at that distance.

## ***Basketball***

Lana and Audrey are students, sitting in a university office, talking about how they both ended up studying at this particular place.

Audrey: My junior year I didn't play.

And I'd always—

I felt I felt like

I'd just go to the practice

just to help them out—

Lana: Right.

Audrey: But um so

when I really could look down the, the bench,

I'd never want him to look at me

because I knew that he'd put me in.

Lana: Yeah.

Audrey: And I never wanted to go in

- because, like I was—  
 you're playing against these girls  
 that are like are awesome.  
 And if you don't—  
 If you're not, used to playing, them
- Lana: Right.
- Audrey: you like y—  
 it's hard to like get into it,  
 all right?
- Lana: Right.
- Audrey: So, ha  
 I looked down the bench  
 and he like looked at me  
 and I'm like, "Oh no."  
 And he goes  
 okay go in for Erin Potters,  
 and there's only like a minute left.  
 And so that's even humiliating at that.
- Lana: {laughing} Oh.  
 I know exactly what you mean.
- Audrey: {laughing} So, so I went I went in,  
 and I had the ball,  
 and I just like turned around  
 and I shot it—  
 didn't even look  
 and it like hit off the backboard so hard.  
 It was so bad  
 like it I could just like like—  
 it was just so embarrassing.
- Lana: Oh Audrey.
- Audrey: But, um,  
 I know like it all just paid off  
 because my senior year  
 I'd never done so well in anything.  
 And I got a lot of offers  
 to play at schools and—
- Lana: And you decided not to?
- Audrey: No because,  
 my like,  
 my whole—  
 I don't know why  
 but my whole life was geared to like college.  
 I could not wait to go to college.  
 And to go to a small college,
- Lana: Right, right, right.

### *Patched Washcloths*

The source conversation for PATCHED WASHCLOTHS took place during Thanksgiving dinner at the home of Ned and Claire. Ned's parents Lydia and Frank are present, as are his brother and sister-in-law Brandon and Sherry. Claire and Brandon move back and forth to and from the adjacent kitchen, while the other participants remain seated at the dining room table.

- Frank: Grandma Imhof,  
she was the stingy one.
- Ned: Claire has *darned* dish towels.
- Frank: *her* mother did it.  
sure.
- Lydia: well see I said  
if you grew up in a house  
where your mother [patched washcloths].
- Ned: [remember darning, Sherry?]
- Sherry: I was going—  
“what are *darned* dish towels.”
- Ned: well.  
it's when you don't want to say  
*damn* dish towels.  
{General laughter}  
don't you call that process darning?
- Lydia: but my mother just  
put them under the sewing machine  
and took two washcloths and made one.  
and *patched* the middle of a washcloth  
when it was worn out.
- Ned: your mother didn't invent that. {laughing}
- Lydia: and I said  
when you grow up like *that*  
it's hard to get with this world  
that throws things away.
- Claire: {arriving} here are darned dish towels.
- Sherry: {laughing} *darned* dish towels.
- Lydia: but were you ever embarrassed, Claire?  
when you invited *friends* to your house,  
did you ever have to be embarrassed?  
I was embarrassed  
when the girls from town came.  
{Laughter from Sherry, Brandon and others}
- Ned: our mother was embarrassed?
- Lydia: and saw *my* mother's patched washcloths.  
I tried to hide them really fast.

*Accidents*

Jacob and Mark share an apartment and study at the local university. The two young men have been discussing how dangerous roughhousing can become, when Mark recalls an accident story his aunt told him. This story in turn reminds Jason of an accident reported about his own aunt.

Jacob: we've kept everything pretty much under control  
[though this year.]

Mark: [that's right,]  
you can't wrestle around  
or bad things will happen.

Jacob: yeah, Roger got [his nose]

Mark: [you know what] happened  
to my one of my aunt's friends out in Iowa?  
like when-when she was younger,  
she had a headgear from braces,  
and these two girls were wrestling around  
just playing around, wrestling.  
and one girl pulled her headgear off her mouth  
and let it snap back.  
and it slid up her face  
and stuck in her eyes  
and blinded her.

Jacob: wow.

Mark: isn't that horrid?  
that's horrid.

Jacob: [when my—]

Mark: [blinded her] for life.  
isn't that horrid.  
that's just—I mean just from goofing around,  
just from screwing—  
a little bit of screwing around.  
and if—and another thing,  
it-it-it's terrible the things that can happen.  
that's why I don't like people  
screwing around with swords  
and trying to throw people in the showers  
and stuff like that,  
and everything like that.

Jacob: you know what happened to my aunt Florence  
when she was a little girl?

Mark: ooh what happened.

Jacob: she was like screwing around  
like around Christmas time?

and like she,  
I-I guess this was like  
when they had candles on trees?  
she lit her hair on fire.

Mark: oh wow.

Jacob: you met her.

Mark: but did anything happen?  
she get a burned head or something?

Jacob: uh I don't know,  
maybe you could shave her  
and look for scar tissue.

Mark: oh I don't want to shave your aunt Florence's head. Does your aunt Florence have like  
spinalbiffera or something like that?

Jacob: I don't know....

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# Propositional Attitudes and Cultural Scripts

Anna Gladkova

**Abstract** In the linguistic literature inspired by the philosophical tradition, the key concepts of analysing ‘propositional attitudes’ are ‘belief’, ‘hope’, ‘doubt’, ‘know’, among others. Yet, this distinction ignores cultural and linguistic variation in the conceptualisation of mental states that can be labelled as ‘propositional attitudes’. Moreover, this approach overlooks the fact that categorisation of mental states in general and ‘propositional attitudes’ in particular is aligned with cultural attitudes and understandings. This chapter proposes a comparative analysis of selected terms of ‘propositional attitudes’ in English and Russian (*to believe* vs. *sčitat’* and *belief* vs. *mnenie*) in terms of universal meanings as they are identified in the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM). The concepts central to the analysis are KNOW and THINK which have been shown to have exact semantic equivalents in Russian and English as well as other languages. The chapter demonstrates that the analysed concepts differ in meaning and can be related to culture-specific cognitive styles which can be formulated as cultural scripts. The chapter demonstrates that the supremacy of logical concepts does not correlate to the architecture of mental lexicon as it is revealed in universal human concepts. It argues that NSM semantic universals can be regarded as more appropriate elements in the analysis of propositional attitudes.

**Keywords** Pragmatics and culture · Cultural scripts · Propositional attitudes

## 1 Introduction

The question of ‘propositional attitudes’ is crucial to the semantic analysis of natural language. Following the definition put forward by Bertrand Russell, in linguistics and philosophy propositional attitudes are defined as reports about someone’s mental state (cf. Garfield 2003; Jaszczolt 2006, 2010). Therefore, representation of conceptualisation of mental states is central to the study of propositional attitudes. It is also important for broader research in cognitive science because understanding of

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the linguistic meaning of propositional attitudes lays the foundation for understanding cognition. The salience of propositional attitudes to research in cognitive science in general and linguistics in particular calls for a research paradigm that could successfully study linguistic properties of propositional attitudes and be applicable in further cognitive research.

The existing linguistic research in the area of propositional attitudes has been largely dominated by the tradition in logic. Consequently, the following two assumptions have been influential. The first assumption is that the most salient states can be represented by logical concepts, those *to know* and *to believe*, among others, and they are treated as final atoms of meaning. The second assumption is the implicit supremacy of English concepts in the domain of propositional attitudes and a disregard of linguistic and cultural variation in conceptualisation of mental states. Therefore, the English concepts like *to believe* and *to hope* are treated as universal psychological and cognitive states in human experience.

As linguistic research shows, certain similarities in the way the domain of mental states is categorised in many languages can be found (cf. D'Andrade 1987; Fortescue 2001; Goddard 2003). However, as Fortescue (2001, p. 38) notes, 'the exact division of the territory by the words of a specific language will vary, being largely conventional'. Empirical research in linguistics demonstrates that among mental state verbs only the concepts *to know*, *to think*, and *to want* are universal and can be used as elements of analysis or grids in the discussion of mental states and propositional attitudes (Goddard 2003, 2007; Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002b). However, *to believe*, the most commonly used verb of propositional attitude, is semantically complex and language specific. On the basis of the English verb *to believe* and its Russian equivalent *ščitat'*, the chapter demonstrates that propositional attitudes are cultural constructs which are correlated with certain cultural assumptions. Therefore, inferences made from the analysis of 'to believe' cannot be applicable to humankind in general simply because the cultural ideas consistent with the semantics of 'to believe' are not shared by speakers of other languages and representatives of other cultures. The chapter also demonstrates that the nouns *belief* and *mnenie* (Russian for 'belief/opinion') which are also commonly used in the analysis of propositional attitudes, are semantically complex and, therefore, are not adequate tools for the analysis of mental states and propositional attitudes either.

By implementing the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) approach, the chapter establishes a link between the semantics and pragmatics of verbs of propositional attitudes and proposes a coherent discussion of their meaning.

The chapter has the following structure. Part one introduces the topic. Part two describes the theoretical framework of the NSM and cultural scripts. Part three discusses the semantics of the English *to believe*. Part four describes the semantics of the Russian verb *ščitat'*. Part five compares the meanings of *to believe* and *ščitat'*. Part six relates the meanings of these verbs to broader shared cultural assumptions. Part seven discusses the meanings of the nouns *belief* and *mnenie*. Part eight concludes.



## 2 The Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) as a Tool for Semantic and Pragmatic Description

### 2.1 NSM and Its Main Theoretical Principles

The NSM is an approach to studying natural language semantics which was initiated by Anna Wierzbicka in the late 1960s. Inspired by Leibniz's hypothesis that all languages have a limited number of concepts by means of which other concepts can be explained, Wierzbicka set an agenda of identifying these concepts by the process of a detailed linguistic analysis of different semantic domains. Leibniz recognised that some words are more basic and simple in meaning than others: 'Amongst the words, some are frequently used and serve as auxiliary to the others' (Leibniz 1987 [1678], p. 162). He called these words 'the alphabet of human thoughts' (Wierzbicka 1972, p. 6).

Wierzbicka's (1972) initial list of universal human concepts comprised 14 words. Over the years, this list considerably expanded and developed into a versatile metalanguage of linguistic analysis. The metalanguage was given the name the 'natural semantic metalanguage' because it is based on the concepts expressed as words of natural language (any natural language) and because it was primarily developed as a tool for semantic analysis. The theory has advanced significantly over more than 30 years; its current state is mainly reflected in Goddard and Wierzbicka (2002b), and Goddard (2008, 2011).<sup>1</sup>

In identifying universal human concepts, the NSM theory accepts Leibniz's hypothesis that they should be shared by people regardless of the language they speak. The NSM theory suggests that there are 63 meanings of this kind.<sup>2</sup> These meanings are called semantic primitives or primes, and they have been identified by a process of trial and error. They constitute the core of human lexicon and can be used to explicate more complex meanings. Apart from words, these meanings can be expressed by bound morphemes or phrasemes. These meanings equal lexical units (cf. Apresjan 1992; Mel'čuk 1988; Goddard 2001). To distinguish the meaning of a prime from the other meanings of a given word, the primes are, by convention, represented by small capital letters. The most recent list of primes is the following (Table 1).

The conceptual primes have been identified on the basis of empirical research. The study of NSM primes and their combinatorial properties has been carried out on a number of typologically divergent languages: Lao, Mangaaba-Mbula, Malay, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Spanish (in Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002b), Hawaii Creole English (Stanwood 1997), Korean, Amharic, Cree (in Goddard 2008), French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese (in Peeters 2006), and Russian (Gladkova

<sup>1</sup> A representative NSM bibliography is available from the NSM Homepage <http://www.griffith.edu.au/humanities-languages/school-languages-linguistics/research/natural-semantic-metalanguage-homepage>

<sup>2</sup> Goddard (2011, p. 375) puts forward a hypothesis about the existence of the 64th prime LITTLE~FEW. Its universal status is yet to be tested.

**Table 1** Semantic primes, grouped into related categories—English and Russian exponents. (After Goddard 2011; Gladkova 2010)

I, YOU, SOMEONE, SOMETHING~THING, PEOPLE, BODY	JA, TY, KTO-TO, ČTO-TO~VEŠČ', LJUDI, TELO	Substantives
KIND, PART	ROD~VID, ČAST'	Relational substantives
THIS, THE SAME, OTHER~ELSE	ÉTOT, TOT ŽE, DRUGOJ	Determiners
ONE, TWO, SOME, ALL, MUCH~MANY	ODIN, DVA, NEKOTORYE, VSE, MNOGO	Quantifiers
GOOD, BAD	XOROŠIJ~XOROŠO, PLOXOJ~PLOXO	Evaluators
BIG, SMALL	BOL'ŠOJ, MALEN'KIJ	Descriptors
KNOW, THINK, WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR	DUMAT', ZNAT', XOTET', ČUVSTVOVAT', VIDET', SLYŠAT'	Mental predicates
SAY, WORDS, TRUE	GOVORIT'~SKAZAT', SLOVA, PRAVDA	Speech
DO, HAPPEN, MOVE, TOUCH	DELAT', PROISXODIT'~SLUČAT'SJA, DVIGAT'SJA, KASAT'SJA	Actions, events, movement, contact
BE (SOMEWHERE), THERE IS, HAVE, BE (SOMEONE/SOMETHING)	BYT' (GDE-TO), BYT'/EST', BYT' U, BYT' (KEM-TO/ČEM-TO)	Location, existence, possession, specification
LIVE, DIE	ŽIT', UMERET'	Life and death
WHEN~TIME, NOW, BEFORE, AFTER, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME, MOMENT	KOGDA~VREMJA, SEJČAS, DO, POSLE, DOLGO, KOROTKOE VREMJA, NEKOTOROE VREMJA, MOMENT	Time
WHERE~PLACE, HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, FAR, NEAR, SIDE, INSIDE	GDE~MESTO, ZDES', NAD, POD, DALEKO, BLIZKO, STORONA, VNUTRI	Space
NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF	NE, MOŽET BYT', MOČ', POTOMU ČTO, ESLI	Logical concepts
VERY, MORE	OČEN', BOL'ŠE~EŠČE	Intensifier, augmentor
LIKE~WAY	KAK~TAK, KAK	Similarity

Primes exist as the meanings of lexical units, not at the level of lexemes. Exponents of primes may be words, bound morphemes, or phrasemes. They can be formally complex. They can have language-specific combinatorial variants (allolexes, marked with ~). Each prime has well-specified syntactic (combinatorial) properties

2010). Partial studies of NSM primes and syntax have been conducted on the basis of another two dozen languages (cf. Goddard and Wierzbicka 1994).

The primes constitute a metalanguage because they have an ability to combine with each other in different ways. As Wierzbicka (1996, p. 19) points out:

Despite its obvious limitations, Leibniz's old metaphor of an 'alphabet of human thoughts' is still quite useful here: conceptual primitives are components which have to be combined in certain ways to be able to express meaning.

The primes are united by a governing syntax. That is, each prime is identified as being able to combine with certain other primes. They form a mini-language which lies at the core of every language. The syntactic properties of primes are revealed in their valency options. For example, the prime SAY allows a universal valency option of 'addressee' and 'locutionary topic'—'someone (X) said something to someone else (Y)' and 'someone (X) said something about something (Z)'. Similarly, the ex-

ponent of SAY in Russian—*GOVORIT'/SKAZAT'*—has the same syntactic properties as its English exponent. In Russian, these sentences with *GOVORIT'/SKAZAT'* are '*kto-to (X) skazal čto-to komu-to drugomu (Y)*' and '*kto-to (X) skazal čto-to o čem-to (Z)*' respectively.

The 'syntactic properties' of the primes are identified in the list of canonical contexts or canonical sentences (Goddard and Wierzbicka 1994, 2002b). Canonical contexts are combinations of primes which reflect their syntactic properties and which can be used in semantic explications. For example, the prime SAY is used in the following canonical sentences (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002a, p. 60):

- X said something
- X said something about something
- X said: '—'
- X said something to someone
- X said some words (these words)
- X said something with (or in) some words

Similarly, canonical sentences are identified for every prime.

The primes in their canonical combinations are used to explicate meaning in the form of reductive paraphrase. Again, this principle can be traced back to Leibniz, who emphasised the importance of paraphrase in constructing an explanation and insisted on the requirement of substitution: 'An analysis of characters consists in the substitution of certain characters by others, equivalent in use to the former' (Leibniz 1987 [1678], p. 161; cf. also Leibniz 1956).

Wierzbicka (1996, p. 11) identified the importance of paraphrase in semantic studies as follows:

Semantics can have an explanatory value only if it manages to 'define' (or explicate) complex and obscure meanings in terms of simple and self-explanatory ones. If a human being can understand any utterances at all (someone else's or their own) it is only because these utterances are built, so to speak, out of simple elements which can be understood by themselves.

Semantic explications written in NSM are formulae which can be substituted for the meanings explained. A formula of this kind is written in the form of a mini text with each component presented from a new line. Each component is related to the previous component, that is it has an anaphoric relationship with the previous components.

## 2.2 NSM Universals in the Domain of 'Mental States'

In the domain of mental states, NSM posits the universality of the following concepts: KNOW, THINK, WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR. The universal properties of these primes are summarised in Table 2.

Therefore, empirical evidence based on NSM studies suggests that only the meanings KNOW, THINK, and WANT (as the most relevant to the analysis of propositional attitudes due to their 'cognitive' nature) can be treated as basic constituents

**Table 2** NSM primes in the domain of ‘mental states’ and their universal syntactic properties

WANT	KNOW	THINK
Someone wants something, someone wants to do/know/ say something, someone wants someone else to do (know) something, someone wants something to happen	Someone knows something (about someone/something), someone knows when (where, etc.)..., someone knows that..., people can know this, someone knows someone else (well)	Someone thinks (something good/bad) about someone/ something, people can think something (good/bad) about me, someone thinks like this:..., many people think like this: ..., (at this time) someone thinks that ...
SEE	HEAR	FEEL
Someone sees someone/something (in a place)	Someone hears something	Someone feels something (good/bad; in part of the body), someone feels like this, someone feels something good/bad towards someone else

of meaning. Other variations (that is verbs like *to believe*, *to desire*, *to hope*, among others) are semantically complex and cannot be treated as building blocks in analysing human mental states. For a more detailed discussion of NSM primes and their syntactic qualities in the domain of mental states, see Goddard (2007).

### 2.3 NSM and Cultural Scripts

The NSM gave rise to the approach known as cultural scripts. The cultural scripts approach is a linguistic technique which is used to formulate shared cultural norms and practices as they are encoded in language. Goddard and Wierzbicka define cultural scripts as ‘a powerful new technique for articulating cultural norms, values, and practices in terms which are clear, precise, and accessible to cultural insiders and to cultural outsiders alike’ (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004, p. 153). Cultural scripts are formulated using a set of empirically established semantic universals as they are identified in NSM.

The NSM approach to studying meaning postulates that meanings exist at the background of cultural assumptions which are mainly subconscious and are shared by speakers of a language (cf. Geertz 1973). Therefore, linguistic meaning needs to be studied in association with cultural assumptions.

The use of cultural scripts as a technique of formulating cultural norms has a number of advantages. Firstly, cultural scripts are capable of representing the cultural insiders’ perspective. Secondly, the use of simple and intelligible concepts creates a possibility for the scripts to be verified by cultural insiders. Thirdly, they are free from the ethnocentric bias which is present in some cultural research.

I will demonstrate the use of the technique of cultural scripts on the basis of examples from English. Wierzbicka (2006a) relates a common use of whimpera-

tives<sup>3</sup> for wording requests, the cultural rules of using *thank you* and the avoidance of phrases like *you must* in suggestions in English, with its prevalence of the value of ‘personal autonomy’. She argues that the idea that ‘it is not good to impose and force other people to do certain things’ is a cultural idea shared by English speakers and that it finds its realisation in language. Wierzbicka (2006a, p. 52) formulates this cultural rule as follows:

[A] [people think like this:]  
 no one can say to another person:  
 ‘I want you to do this  
 you have to do it because of this’  
 [B] [people think like this:]  
 no one can say to another person:  
 ‘I don’t want you to do this  
 you can’t do it because of this’

She comments on these scripts as follows: ‘These scripts do not say that people can do anything they want to do or that there can be no rules legitimately preventing people from doing what they want to do. Rather, they say that it cannot be another person’s expression of will that prevents me from doing what I want to do or forces me to do what I don’t want to do’ (Wierzbicka 2006a, p. 52).

Wierzbicka further demonstrates that the value of personal autonomy in English is closely related to another cultural value, namely the inclination not to put undue pressure on other people, and that both are reflected in English (Wierzbicka 2006a, b). She notes that the expressions *to put pressure* and *to act under pressure* in contemporary English are highly revealing in this regard. Interestingly, they did not occur in Shakespeare’s language, which suggests modern salience of the value of ‘non-imposition’. The expression *to put pressure* and its negative cultural connotation highlight the idea that there exists a cultural prohibition on imposing one’s will on other people and expecting them to act in accord with the will of other people. A related cultural script is formulated by Wierzbicka (2006a, p. 52) as follows:

[C] [people think like this:]  
 when I do something it is good if I do it because I want to do it,  
 not because someone else wants me to do it

NSM as a tool for semantic analysis and a basis for the cultural scripts approach allows us to study linguistic meaning and also the pragmatics of interaction. Therefore, it represents an adequate tool for studying the semantics and pragmatics of propositional attitudes (cf. Capone 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Whimperative (or wh-imperative) is a command or request which is worded as a question (e.g. *Would you mind washing it out?*, *Could you just turn it down a bit?*). The term comprises of *wh-*, which stands for an interrogative word and *imperative*.

## 2.4 Data

The Russian data for the study is drawn from the Russian National Corpus ([www.ruscorpora.ru](http://www.ruscorpora.ru)). This Corpus is an online electronic resource of Russian texts with the size of 340 million words. The Corpus includes texts of the period from the end of the eighteenth century till the present. The Corpus is a representative linguistic source which comprises both written texts (including literary, academic, journalist, and educational works) and transcripts of spoken Russian (including data from a number of dialects). The Corpus is relatively balanced; different types of texts are represented in proportion to their occurrence within the target period. This study is based on a contemporary use of the term, that is from the 1970s till the present.

The English data is sourced from Collins Wordbanks Online (<http://www.collins.co.uk/page/Wordbanks+Online>), which is a representative source of contemporary English. The corpus contains 550 million words from a wide range of texts from various sources, both written and spoken, and accounts for eight varieties of English (UK, US, Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland). The majority of sources in the corpus date from between 2001 and 2005 making it one of the most current corpora.

## 3 The Semantics of *to Believe*

Wierzbicka (2006a) puts forward a detailed semantic analysis of the verb *to believe* in English. She postulates its polysemy and rightly argues that there is semantic difference between the uses of *to believe* with and without the complementizer *that*. I accept this difference and in this chapter, I will only discuss the meaning of *to believe* as used with the complementizer *that* because it is the most common context in the analysis of propositional attitudes.

Wierzbicka (2006a, p. 218) proposes the following semantic formula as a representation of meaning of *I believe that*:<sup>4</sup>

[D] *I believe that there is a real need...* =

- (a) when I think about it, I think that there is a real need
- (b) I know that someone else can think not like this
- (c) I can say why I think like this
- (d) I think that it is good if someone thinks like this

Component (a) introduces the general frame of the explication; it reflects the fact that *to believe* is a mental state verb. The prime WHEN in this component is required to represent the universal syntactic properties of THINK as described in Goddard and Karlsson (2008); THINK in a propositional use requires time reference.

<sup>4</sup> Wierzbicka (2006a) and Zaloznjak (2005) independently of each other suggest that the properties of propositional attitude verbs like 'to believe' are best revealed in the first person singular present form.

Wierzbicka (2006a, p. 215) claims that *I believe that* ‘states a view that the speaker is committed to, and it could be expanded by phrases *that’s what I believe* or *my belief is...*’. This explains the presence of component (c) in the explication. Wierzbicka (2006a, p. 216) further notices that ‘typically, *I believe that* conveys a conviction, and it tends to introduce evaluative personal judgements [...] rather than purely factual statements’.

There is inherent ‘goodness’ of one’s thought embedded in the meaning of *believe that* and it is represented in component (d). *To believe that* would not collocate with expressions like *I doubt it, maybe, it’s impossible* (e.g. *?I doubt it but I believe that we will win the game*).

The ability of *to believe that* to collocate with adverbs expressing the degree of commitment *strongly, firmly, truly, and deeply* supports the claim about ‘commitment’ being part of the meaning of *I believe that*. Moreover, there can be a degree of emotional involvement associated with the way of thinking expressed by this verb, and its collocates *passionately, fiercely, sincerely, fervently, and fondly* can be quoted here. Some examples from Wordbanks Online corpus:

- (1) Drawing on his practical experience he passionately believed that collective action, nationally and internationally, was necessary to solve the problems confronting France and Europe.
- (2) And he knew that she, as well as himself, fiercely believed that the basis of their marriage was rock solid.
- (3) I sincerely believe that the infotech revolution has changed the image of Indians internationally.
- (4) Civil servants had fondly believed that the joint council was moribund.
- (5) As children, we fervently believe that summer is the only season that matters.

While *to believe that* implies adherence to one’s views, this adherence can be of different levels. Along with already quoted terms expressing a ‘strong’ level of ‘commitment’, other terms of degree can be quoted: *scarcely, half, barely*:

- (6) They could scarcely believe that he would go to the competition, knowing the damage it would inflict on the newspaper that had been his life for thirty-five years.
- (7) She half believed that Roger Cavanagh must sense her feeling.
- (8) She could barely believe that she’d ever fancied him, motorbike or no motorbike.

This quality of *to believe* also emphasises the argument about the understanding that there can be other views on the matter as embedded in the meaning of *to believe that* (component b).

I will now turn to the discussion of the meaning of *sčitat’* based on Gladkova’s (2007) analysis.

## 4 The Semantics of *sčitat'*

*Sčitat'* is the second most commonly used epistemic verb in Russian after the verb *dumat'* 'to think' (see Table 3).<sup>5</sup> *Dumat'* is the most basic verb expressing thinking in Russian and is the exponent of the NSM prime THINK (Gladkova 2007, 2010). The whole range of mental state verbs in Russian is much less diverse than in English (cf. e.g. Wierzbicka 2006a). The relative high frequency of *sčitat'* indicates its importance as a word for expressing 'opinion' in Russian. Like *to believe* in English, *sčitat'* is the most commonly used verb in the linguistic description of propositional attitude reports in Russian.

*Sčitat'* introduces an opinion which requires some time to arrive at. It would be unnatural to use this verb in contexts presenting involuntary and casual ideas which do not need time and effort to evolve. To illustrate this point, I refer (in a slightly paraphrased form) to an example quoted by Jurij Apresjan. This sentence can be used in a situation when someone is asked to feel the water in a bathtub and say how warm it is. In this context, one can reply using the verb *dumat'* (Apresjan 2004, p. 1129; see also Apresjan 2000, p. 149):

- (9) *Ja dumaju, čto gradusov tridcat' pjat'.*  
*?Ja sčitaju, čto gradusov tridcat' pjat'.*  
 I think that [it is] 35 degrees.

It will be unnatural to use *sčitat'* in such a context because one needs some time to develop an opinion introduced by *sčitat'*. Since *sčitat'* introduces an opinion which has taken time to develop, it is not possible to combine it with time markers of momentary thought like *inogda* 'sometimes', *v etot moment* 'at that moment', as in the following sentence:

- (10) *\*Inogda ja sčitaju, čto on čestnyj čelovek.*  
 Sometimes I think [*\*sčitat'*] that he is an honest person.

The time factor goes hand in hand with the issue of complexity of thought: *sčitat'* introduces a 'considered opinion' which is based on a person's world view (that is, on many things that a person has thought about before) (cf. Apresjan 2004). *Sčitat'*

**Table 3** The frequencies of occurrences of propositional *dumat'* 'think', *sčitat'* 'believe', *predpolagat'* 'assume/presume', *polagat'* 'guess', *predstavljat'* 'imagine' and *naxodit'* 'find' from the National Russian Corpus, period 1970–present (per 1 million words)

Dumat', čto 'think that'	159
Sčitat', čto 'believe that'	145
Polagat', čto 'suppose that'	48
Predpolagat', čto 'assume/presume that'	18
Predstavljat', čto 'imagine that'	7
Naxodit', čto 'find that'	2

<sup>5</sup> In this chapter, I discuss the meaning of *sčitat'* only in the propositional frame *sčitat', čto*, assuming that in other syntactic frames it has different meanings. For a discussion of other uses of *sčitat'* see Apresjan (2000, 2004).



is appropriate when a person spends some time reflecting upon a particular matter and ‘matching’ it against his or her system of beliefs. In a situation such as reporting the temperature of water in a bathtub, one does not need to perform a complex mental action to give an opinion. *Sčitat’* can be used to speak about things that a person has devoted a certain amount of time and effort to think about, relying on his or her system of beliefs. As the previously quoted examples show, *sčitat’* is used with complements expressing a complex thought.

*Sčitat’* introduces an opinion which is developed due to the person’s will (Mel’čuk and Žolkovskij 1984; Apresjan 2004; Zaliznjak 2005). When *sčitat’* is used, it means that the person has decided to think in this way. An involuntary idea would not be introduced by *sčitat’*. Linguistic evidence supporting this point can be found in the fact that *sčitat’* cannot be used in a reflexive form. This form is, however, possible for another mental state verb in Russian, *dumat’*. Similarly, *sčitat’* cannot occur in a dative construction with the reflexive form of the verb *xotet’* ‘want’—*xotet’sja* ‘want.REFL’ and, again, this combination is possible for *dumat’*:

(11) *Mne vseгда xotelos’ dumat’, čto delo, kotorym ja zanimajus’, nazывaetsja žurnalistikoj i trebuet ot professionala umenija videt’ i pisat’ ob uvidennom.*

I [I.DAT] have always wanted [want.REF.PAST] to think [*dumat’*] that my occupation is called journalism and that it requires from a professional the ability to see and write about what one has seen.

*Sčitat’* cannot be used in such a context:

(12) *Mne vseгда xotelos’ \*sčitat’, čto delo, kotorym ja zanimajus’, nazывaetsja žurnalistikoj*

...

I have always wanted to think [*\*sčitat’*] that my occupation is called journalism ...

According to Wierzbicka (1992, pp. 426–428), the wide elaboration and frequent use of this kind of dative construction is revealing of Russian culture: it presents a desire for something as involuntary and inexplicable, denies responsibility, and emphasises spontaneity. *Dumat’* is suitable for this context as well as other verbs like *spat’* ‘sleep’, *est’* ‘eat’, *pet’* ‘sing’, etc. Therefore, a thought expressed by *dumat’* can be involuntary and spontaneous. The same does not apply to the kind of thought expressed by *sčitat’*, this is why *sčitat’* does not occur with *xočetsja* in this dative construction. This fact possibly suggests that thinking introduced by *sčitat’* is not involuntary.

*Sčitat’* expresses a person’s very assured, confident, and grounded position because it is a result of a careful consideration of the situation. It does not collocate with phrases such as *ja ne uveren* ‘I am not sure’ or *ja mogu ošibat’sja* ‘I may be wrong’: *\*Ja sčitaju ..., no ja ne uveren* ‘\*I think/consider, but I am not sure’:

(13) *\*Ja sčitaju, čto on podlec, no ja ne uveren.*

\*I believe [*sčitat’*] that he is a rascal, but I am not sure.

(14) *\*Ja sčitaju, čto ona krasiva, no ja mogu ošibat’sja.*

\*I believe [*sčitat’*] that she is beautiful, but I could be mistaken.

Moreover, *sčitat’* introduces a ‘final’ way of thinking about something, the highest level of assurance in one’s point of view. This becomes evident from the incompatibility of *sčitat’* with adverbs expressing a high degree of assurance, for example

*sil'no* 'strongly'. Other adverbs expressing a degree of assurance—*nemnogo* 'little', *slegka* 'little', *počti* 'almost'—are also not compatible with *sčitat'*.

*Sčitat'* expresses a very firm and assured point of view which a person has decided to stick to at a certain moment and does not want to change. Zalznjak (1991, p. 191) characterises the opinion expressed by *sčitat'* as very stable because it is 'characteristic of a personality'. It would be unnatural to use *sčitat'* in situations when a person is unsure or might change his or her mind. To support this point, one can note again the incompatibility of *sčitat'* with momentary time markers signalling a transient idea. In the following example, a man says that at times he thinks he should have become a doctor. This idea comes and goes; it is not a permanent belief of the person. Thus, *sčitat'* is not appropriate in this context:

(15) \**Inogda ja sčitaju, što mne stoilo stat' medikom.*

At times I think [*sčitat'*] that I should have become a doctor.

As I have already shown, to introduce an opinion with *sčitat'* one needs willingly to spend some time and effort thinking about something and arrive at a certain way of thinking about it. The opinion introduced by *sčitat'* is a kind of thought which one regards as a good one and on which one might base one's actions. Certain contexts with *sčitat'* provide evidence of this. When used in the past tense, it can introduce a point of view that later proved to be mistaken, but which a person used as a basis for action, believing at the moment of the action that it was right. The following example from the Corpus illustrates this:

(16) *Éto byl tajnyj brak. Ja sčital, što moe togdašnee otnošenje k podruge—éto i est' istin-naja ljubov', a poskol'ku temperamenta u menja bylo xot' otbavljaj, to rešil, što nam nado nepremenno ženit'sja.*

It was a secret marriage. I thought [*sčitat'*] that the feeling I had at that time for my girl-friend was real love, and since I had plenty of spirit, I decided that we had to get married.

In this example, the character realises that the 'belief' he had at a certain time in the past (that his feeling was real love) was wrong, though he based some actions on it (secretly got married).

Another usage specific to *sčitat'* occurs in constructions such as *budem sčitat', što ...* 'we will believe/think that' and *davajte sčitat', što ...* 'let's believe/think that', which relate to an idea that becomes a foundation for action (and is thus evidently considered a good idea). This kind of construction indicates agreement about a certain condition that people accept in order to continue action. The following examples can be quoted:

(17) *Esli gorovit' ob étom ne xočetsja, budem sčitat', što voprosa ne bylo.*

If you don't want to talk about it, let's pretend [*sčitat'*] the question didn't arise.

(18) *Gospoda, prekraščaem spor, budem sčitat', što my našli, poterjali i vnov' našli istinu!* Gentlemen, let's stop the argument, let's pretend [*sčitat'*] that we found, lost and again found the truth!

(19) *Esli vy bystren'ko uberete konvert v karman, budem sčitat', što éтого épizoda ne bylo. V protivnom slučae my s vami sil'no possorimsja.*

If you now quickly put the envelope away into your pocket, we will pretend [*sčitat'*] that this episode didn't take place. Otherwise I will seriously quarrel with you.

(20) *Davajte sčitat', što našego razgovora ne bylo.*

Let's pretend [*sčítat*'] that our conversation didn't take place.

(21) *Davajte budem sčítat', čto u nas s vami nič'ja, i pogovorim vse-taki o dele.*

Let's pretend [*sčítat*'] that we played a drawn game and let's nevertheless talk about the matter.

(22) *Davajte budem sčítat', čto Viktor pogib uže kommunistom.*

Let's pretend [*sčítat*'] that when Victor died he was already a communist.

In these examples, the people involved decide to agree that something happened or did not happen (the question was not asked, the bribe was not offered, the game is over, the person who died was already a communist), although in the reality the opposite happened (the question was asked, the bribe was offered, the game is not over, the person who died was not a communist). They accept a certain proposition as a true or good one, knowing that it is not true. This fact justifies the inclusion of the semantic component 'I think it is good to think like this' in the meaning of *sčítat*'.

To sum up the essence of the semantics of *sčítat*, I will quote Jurij Apresjan on the kind of thinking involved in *sčítat*':

... serious conditions are required to develop an opinion (that which we *sčítaem* 'consider'). An opinion is usually the result of a fairly long and thorough process of consideration of all observable facts (note the original idea of *sčēt* 'counting' which is present in *sčítat*'), weighing up other possible interpretations of them and selecting [by an act of will] the interpretation which best accords with the accumulated personal experience of the subject and which he is prepared to uphold as correct.<sup>6</sup> ... Generally speaking, the more complex a situation is, the greater the number of possible interpretations, and the harder it is to establish the truth, the more justification there is for the use of *sčítat*'. And the simpler, the more obvious and trivial it is, the greater the justification for using *dumat*'. (Apresjan 2000, p. 149)

Thus, *sčítat*' introduces the result of a thinking process which was voluntary and involved the consideration of facts and weighing them against the person's world view or system of beliefs.

It is interesting to consider the semantics of *sčítat*' in the light of its etymology. It derives from the homonymous word *sčítat*', which means 'count', as in 'count money'. When counting things, we see them clearly, we are in control and we can provide an unambiguous answer. This link gives at least two insights into the semantic character of *sčítat*' as a mental state verb. On the one hand, it explains that *sčítat*' is a word presenting a considered opinion, which is the result of a relatively long and careful process of assessment of the available facts. On the other hand, it shows that *sčítat*' also introduces an opinion on something, which is free of doubt. The unambiguity of counting is embedded in *sčítat*' as a verb of 'propositional attitude'. *Sčítat*' presents a single way of interpreting the matter and does not ask for, or make reference to, other options or opinions.

Thus, *sčítat*' introduces the result of a thinking process which was voluntary and which involved the consideration of facts and weighing them against a person's world view or system of beliefs. In the light of all these considerations, I propose the following explication for the verb *sčítat*':

<sup>6</sup> In the square brackets, a more accurate variant of translation is given.

- [E] *Ja sčítaju, čto [ty postupil pravil'no]*  
 (I think/believe that [you did the right thing])  
 (a) when I think about it I think that [—]  
 (b) I have thought about it for some time  
 (c) I have thought about things like this before  
 (d) I think that it is good to think about it like this  
 (e) I want to think about it like this  
 (f) I know why I think about it like this  
 (g) I don't want to think about it in any other way

Component (a) introduces the general frame of the explication. Component (b) shows that the mental process involved in *sčítat'* requires a certain amount of time for thinking. Component (c) states that the point of view introduced by *sčítat'* relies on the person's world view. Component (d) reflects the idea that, from the point of view of this person, *sčítat'* like this is a good way to think. Component (e) shows that the person's will is involved in thinking about the matter in this particular way. Component (f) states that a person has a reason to think in this way. Component (g) says that it is the ultimate position of the person, which this person does not want to change.

## 5 *Sčítat'* and *to Believe* Contrasted

If *sčítat'* (explication E) is compared with *to believe that* (explication D), the first difference that becomes evident is how egocentric *sčítat'* is. There is no consideration of the position of other people (component (b) in 'to believe that'); the process of thinking associated with *sčítat'* arrives at a position which is seen as good by the person involved and is not related to the position of others (component d in *sčítat'* vs. component d in 'to believe that'). 'To believe that' is more 'open' in the sense that it has the component 'I can say why I think like this', as if a person is expecting to be asked to justify his or her belief. *Sčítat'* involves a stronger grounding of one's position—'I know why' (component f), but contains no sign of sharing it with other people. *Sčítat'* also embodies a well-considered position (components b and c which are absent in 'to believe that'). It is intensified by the 'will' component (e), which is not present in 'to believe that'. *Sčítat'* also expresses the ultimate position of a person, which he or she does not want to change (component g).

More evidence for *sčítat'* being a word expressing opinion in a more 'assured' and 'firm' way than *to believe that*, can be found in differences between the combinatorial properties of the two words. One case is when *sčítat'* can be used in phrases such as *davajte sčítat'* 'let's suppose', *budem sčítat'* 'we will suppose' to urge someone to agree upon some condition which might not be true but which the interlocutors can decide to accept as true and use as a foundation for further action. As was stated earlier in this chapter, this use means that *sčítat'* introduces an idea which can be considered a foundation for further action even if the interlocutors know that it is not a true suggestion (as demonstrated in examples 17–22). In this respect, *sčítat'* is different from 'to believe that' which introduces an opinion in a

‘tentative’ way and acknowledges the possibility of other ways of thinking. This difference in meaning supports component (d) in *sčitat*—‘I think that it is good to think like this’. This semantic component shows that the opinion introduced by *sčitat* can be regarded as ‘good’ in order to rely on it in undertaking further action. The impossibility of combining ‘to believe that’ with *let’s* can be explained by the presence of the components (b) and (d) in the semantic structure of ‘to believe that’: ‘I know that someone else can think not like this’ and ‘I think that it is good if someone thinks like this’. The ‘goodness’ component in ‘to believe that’ has no claim for universality and is stated in a very relativistic way.

Another semantic feature that makes *sčitat* different from ‘to believe that’ is the impossibility of its usage with intensifiers. While it is possible in English to say ‘I strongly/firmly believe that...’ (as the following examples from the corpus suggest), *sčitat* cannot be used with any of the words that can intensify a degree of ‘opinion’ in Russian—*gluboko* ‘deeply’, *sil’no* ‘strongly’ or *tverdo* ‘firmly’:

(23) I do strongly believe that Mr. and Mrs. Joe Average should be made aware of how lesbians and gay men have enriched their lives.

(24) ‘We strongly believe that it is just a short-term effect, and in an area that has sensitive wildlife, there will need to be poisoning of foxes and cats and dingoes’, he said.

(25) I firmly believe that Queenslanders are special people. There is something inside all of us which keeps driving us towards the finish line.

(26) I firmly believe that the only way forward in the peace process now is through talks and negotiations and we encourage all parties to participate actively and constructively in the process.

(27) \**Ja gluboko sčitaju, čto ...*

\*I deeply believe that ...

(28) \**Ja sil’no sčitaju, čto ...*

\*I strongly believe that...

This fact can be interpreted in the following way. The verb *sčitat* expresses an extreme level of ‘opinion’ or ‘belief’ which cannot be extended further. The presence of component (d)—‘I don’t want to think about it in any other way’—reflects the impossibility of *sčitat* to combine with intensifiers. This component makes *sčitat* a much more ‘assured’ verb than ‘to believe that’. It again excludes any consideration for the position of other people, such as incorporated in ‘to believe that’. Moreover, *sčitat*, unlike *to believe that*, does not combine with adverbs signifying a low degree of certainty, such as *scarcely*, *barely*, *merely*, and *half* (*počti*, *edva*, *napolovinu* in Russian).

*Sčitat* reflects a thought process which is necessarily conscious and which develops due to a person’s will; it presents a conscious way of thinking about something based on consideration of facts. The thought process reflected in *to believe that* is conscious as well, but the corpus also shows examples where *to believe that* combines with the words *subconsciously* and *instinctively*, thus signalling its possible unconscious character:

(29) In January 1947 Attlee decided to proceed with the programme because he instinctively believed that Britain was still a great power and therefore required the most powerful weapons that science could produce.

(30) Some sufferers subconsciously believe that if they eat whilst standing up, driving or walking it doesn’t count.

**Table 4** Differences in collocational profiles of *to believe that* and *sčitat'*. (Source: Based on National Russian Corpus and Wordbanks Online data)

Aspect of meaning	<i>to believe that</i>	<i>sčitat'</i>
High level of commitment to the 'belief'	<i>deeply</i>	? <i>gluboko</i>
	<i>strongly</i>	? <i>sil'no</i>
Low and mid-level of commitment to the 'belief'	<i>scarcely</i>	? <i>edva</i>
	<i>barely</i>	? <i>edva</i>
	<i>merely</i>	? <i>počti</i>
Involvement of feeling	<i>half</i>	? <i>na polovinu</i>
	<i>fondly</i>	? <i>ljubovno</i>
	<i>fiercely</i>	? <i>gnevno</i>
	<i>passionately</i>	? <i>strastno</i>
Involvement of consciousness	<i>fervently</i>	? <i>gorjacho</i>
	<i>subconsciously</i>	? <i>podsoznatel'no</i>
Possibility of changing the opinion	<i>instinctively</i>	? <i>instinktivno</i>
	<i>?unambiguously</i>	<i>odnoznačno</i>
	<i>?categorically</i>	<i>kategoričeski</i>

Similar collocations (with *instinktivno* 'instinctively' and *podsoznatel'no* 'subconsciously') would be impossible for *sčitat'*.

The thought process reflected in *sčitat'* is also purely rational and is akin to counting (as the verb's etymology suggests). *To believe that* is less 'rational' as its collocations with emotive adverbs *fondly*, *fiercely*, *passionately*, *fervently* indicate (as quoted above). Similar combinations were not found for *sčitat'*.

Table 4 summarises differences in collocational profiles between *sčitat'* and *to believe*. The impossible combinations are marked with '?' and represent closest translational equivalents of the possible collocates.

*Sčitat'* in its degree of expressiveness can be compared to the English verb *to reckon*. However, *to reckon* does not occupy a similar cultural niche among English epistemic verbs as *sčitat'* does among the Russian verbs.

## 6 *Sčitat'* and *to Believe* in Cultural Contexts

In this section, I argue that as mental state verbs *sčitat'* and *to believe* are cultural constructs and their meanings are aligned with cultural understandings. They primarily relate with cultural rules about ways of speaking and determine the existence of 'cognitive styles' (Hymes 1961; Goddard 2003; Levisen 2010) specific to Russian and English respectively.

*Sčitat'* embeds in its meaning a 'direct' and 'forceful' way of expressing what a person thinks. This way of expression can be related to a general tendency of being 'direct' in speaking one's mind which is characteristic of the Russian language. This feature is commonly recognised as distinctly Russian by foreigners as well as by Russians themselves. For example, Yale Richmond, a former US Foreign Service Officer who spent twenty years in Russia, characterises the manner of speaking which he finds specifically Russian as follows:

Straight talk is appreciated, even when it leads to disagreement. When disagreement does occur, Russians appreciate honesty rather than attempts to paper over differences. It is far better to level with them and be certain that they fully understand your position. They respect adversaries who are straightforward and sincere in expressing views that diverge from their own. (Richmond 2003, p. 143)

A somewhat similar observation was made by Svetlana Boym, who said that ‘Russia is a country, where nobody observes small-talk conventions’ (Boym 1994, p. 215).

Russian scholars Proxorov and Sternin (2002), authors of the book *Russian Communicative Behaviour*, also note an absence of compromise and a tendency to provide evaluative judgments as specific Russian features:

A Russian person in a situation of an argument or a difference of opinions normally refuses to compromise. An uncompromising attitude (*beskompromissnost’*) is an essential trait of character of Russian people which is revealed in their communicative behaviour. (Proxorov and Sternin 2002, p. 200)

Russians in comparison with representatives of Western communicative culture express their opinion categorically, with determination and without any softening. In the Russian mentality, compromises are unworthy and manifest unscrupulousness. (Proxorov and Sternin 2002, p. 201)

Disagreement, like opinion, is stated quite categorically in Russian communicative behaviour. It is commonly expressed as ‘*Net!*’ ‘No!’, ‘*Ni za čto!*’ ‘Not at any price!’, ‘*Ni v koem slučae!*’ ‘In no circumstances!’, ‘*Nikogda!*’ ‘Never!’, etc., regardless of who the interlocutors are. (Proxorov and Sternin 2002, p. 204)

Russians constantly give evaluative judgments to situations, events, third parties, as well as to their immediate interlocutors. Negative and positive appraisals are very common. Evaluations are expressed openly, without any softening, even if they are negative. (Proxorov and Sternin 2002, p. 213)

Proxorov and Sternin (2002) use the words *beskompromissnost’* ‘uncompromising attitude’, *prjamota* ‘directness’, and *kategoričnost’* ‘flatness’ to describe Russian communicative style.

The tendency to express one’s point of view in a ‘direct’ and categorical fashion is reflected in the semantics of the verb *sčitat’* and constitutes its cultural specificity. This tendency can be explained by the importance of the concepts and values of *pravda* and *istina* in the Russian language and culture. Both of these words are translated into English as ‘truth’, yet this does not reflect the difference in meaning between the two words. As Wierzbicka (2002) shows, *pravda* and *istina* are important cultural words in Russian related to the existence of a conversational routine positively evaluating people’s ‘telling the truth’ (*govorit’ pravdu*). She formulates this cultural rule as follows:

[F] people can say two kinds of things to other people  
 things of one kind are true  
 it is good if someone wants to say things of this kind to other people  
 things of the other kind are not true  
 it is not good if someone wants to say things of this other kind to other people  
 it is bad if someone wants other people to think that these things are true  
 (Wierzbicka 2002, p. 408)

When Russian speakers express their ‘opinion’ by using *sčitat’*, they do it in an ‘absolute’ way which is consistent with the value assigned to *pravda* and *istina*.

This script also relates to another script, prescribing an ‘open’ and ‘sincere’ display of one’s thoughts and feelings and which can be formulated in the following way (cf. Wierzbicka 1999):

[G] people think like this:  
when I think something about something it is good if other people can know about it

The English *to believe* exists at a very different cultural scene. In terms of speech practices, being ‘measured’ in the expression of one’s opinion is a cultural norm in Anglo English. The anthropologist Kate Fox distinguishes the following conversational rules specific to English: ‘moderation’, ‘reserve and social inhibition’, ‘the importance of politeness and avoidance of conflict’, ‘the precedence of etiquette over logic’ (Fox 2004, p. 36). The importance of expressing one’s opinion in a non-confronting way cannot be overstated as a specific conversational feature of English (cf. Larina 2009). These conversational features can be related to such cultural values as ‘personal autonomy’ (Wierzbicka 2006a), ‘privacy’ (Wierzbicka 2006a; Fox 2004; Paxman 1998) and ‘non-imposition’ (Wierzbicka 2006b). The semantics of *to believe* is highly consistent with the cultural rules of ‘moderation’ and ‘personal autonomy’ (see Sect. 2.2 of the chapter for cultural scripts on ‘personal autonomy’ as formulated by Wierzbicka (2006a)).

Therefore, it can be observed that the semantics of the mental state verbs *sčitat’* and *to believe* is correlated with broader cultural values in general, and culturally acceptable ways of talking, in particular.

Levisen (2010) goes further in identifying cultural elements associated with epistemic and mental state verbs and suggests that it is possible to talk about the existence of culture-specific ‘cognitive styles’. Following the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, one can say that the most salient concepts in the domain of mental states can explain the existence of certain ways of thinking specific to a culture. The following cognitive style is arguably most important in association with *sčitat’*:

[H] [people think like this:]  
when someone thinks about something,  
it is good if this someone thinks like this at the same time:  
I think about it like this  
I want to think about it like this  
I don’t want to think about it in any other way

This cognitive style is highly consistent with the values of *beskompromissnost’* ‘refusal to compromise’ and *kategoričnost’* ‘being categorical’ in Russian, as identified by Proxorov and Sternin (2002).

The prevalent English cognitive styles can be formulated in the following way:

[I] [people think like this:]  
when someone thinks about something,  
it is good if this someone thinks like this at the same time:  
someone else can think about it not like this



These cultural scripts explain why common Russian ways of expressing ‘opinion’ can be at odds with Anglo ways of talking and why interaction between Russian and English speakers can lead to situations of misunderstanding and cultural clashes (Larina 2009; Visson 1998). Consequently, Russian speakers can appear as ‘pushy’ and ‘opinionated’ to English speakers while English speakers might seem ‘vague’, ‘unclear’ and ‘indecisive’ to Russian speakers.

## 7 On the Inadequacy of the Words *belief* and *mnenie* as Tools of Semantic Analysis

The English *to believe* has a cognate in the noun *belief* which is also commonly used in the analysis of propositional attitude reports. *Belief* stands for one’s way of thinking about a certain matter. This way of thinking can be associated with a particular domain, e.g. *religious belief*, *political belief*, *philosophical belief*, or *spiritual belief*. It can also be associated with a group of people sharing a particular belief, e.g. *Christian belief*, *Muslim belief*, *Aboriginal belief*.

The noun *belief* can be explicated as follows:

- [J] It is my belief that ...  
 (a) when I think about it, I think that ...  
 (b) I think that it is good to think like this

If this explication of *belief*[J] is compared with the explication of the verb *to believe* [D] (Sect. 3, above), we do not observe a components similar to (c)—‘I can say why I think like this’ and (d)—‘I think that it is good if someone thinks like this’ in [D]. *Belief* does not contain reference to the ‘plurality’ of opinions; it is more of a personality extension. *Belief* is not dialogical to the same extent as the verb *to believe*. An argument against inclusion of the component ‘I can say why I think like this’ is the possibility of collocation of *belief* with *irrational*—*irrational belief*.

In Russian, there is no noun which morphologically correlates with *sčitat’* and which embodies a mental state. The closest in meaning noun is *mnenie* which is, in fact, closer in meaning to the English *opinion* than to *belief*. *Mnenie* has a cognate verb in the verb *mnit’*, which historically used to occupy the place of the major mental state verb, but it does not anymore (Makeeva 2003; Zaliznjak 2005). The absence of a cognate noun for *sčitat’* explains the differences in meaning between *sčitat’* and *mnenie* (apart from the differences in meaning associated with different parts of speech).

*Mnenie* implies a ‘milder’ and less straightforward way of referring to one’s thoughts than *sčitat’*. It is also less evaluative and forceful than *sčitat’*. As corpus data show, the collocation *po moemu/ego mneniju* ‘in my/his view’ can introduce a kind of ‘opinion’ that is not evaluative but more factual and interpretive, for example:

- (31) *Po ee mneniju, suščestvujut četyre točki zrenija na ob’edinenie.*  
 In her view, there are four points of view on the reconciliation.

The collocations *obščestvennoe mnenie* ‘public opinion’ and *mnenie tolpy* ‘opinion of the crowd’ indicate that *mnenie* can be shared by many people. They also indicate that *mnenie* is something that can be approximated. Here *mnenie* and *sčitat’* differ because *sčitat’* introduces an ultimate ‘position’ that a person holds and which is unique and usually uncompromising. Therefore, the collocations *?tolpa sčitaet* ‘the crowd believes’ and *?obščestvo sčitaet* ‘the society believes’ sound very unnatural. *Sčitat’* can also be used to refer to the way of thinking of a group of people (e.g. *mnogie sčitajut, čto* ‘many people think that’), but unlike *mnenie*, it does not collocate with words that designate a very large number of people. This indicates a less ‘firm’ and ‘passionate’ way of thinking which is reflected in *mnenie* as compared to *sčitat’*.

*Mnenie* incorporates in its semantics the idea that a given way of thinking is one way of thinking about the matter in question and that there can be other ways of thinking about it. *Mnenie* of a lay person can be opposed to *mnenie* of an expert, as the following example from the Corpus shows:

- (32) *Éto moe mnenie kak graždanina Rossii, a ne kak specialista.*  
It is my view as a Russian citizen and not as a specialist.

*Sčitat’* cannot be used in such an opposition because *sčitat’* does not imply other possible ways of looking at the matter:

- (33) *?Ja tak sčitaju kak graždanina Rossii, a ne kak specialista.*  
?I think like this as a Russian citizen and not as a specialist.

In some situations, a person might be able to look at the same situation from different points of view and understand that their *mnenie* may undergo a shift depending on what perspective they take. For example, a mother who is a doctor might have mixed feelings about prescribing antibiotics to her own child. Her *mnenie* as a mother here might not be the same as her *mnenie* as a doctor. Eventually, one *mnenie* will prevail. However, such situations suggest that *mnenie* presupposes that there can be other ways of thinking about the situation. This is not the case with *sčitat’*.

*Sčitat’* is to a larger degree reflective of a person’s worldview. The use of *sčitat’* requires a greater degree of maturity than *mnenie*. *Mnenie* is something that a child can have, as the following examples illustrate:

- (34) *S vozrasta desjati let sud objazan učityvat’ mnenie rebenka.*  
From the age of ten the court has to consider the child’s point of view.  
(35) *Vyslušav mnenie detej, otec delitsja s nimi vospominanijami o svoem tjaželom detstve.*  
Having listened to the children’s point of view, the father shares with them his memories of his difficult childhood.

*Sčitat’* is less likely to be used to express what a child thinks. For example, it would be unnatural to say:

- (36) *?Moj šestiletnij syn sčitaet, čto on dolžen poiti v školu s uglublennym izučeniem inostrannyx jazykov.*  
My six-year old son believes that he should go to a school which offers an in-depth study of foreign languages.

While it is natural to use such a sentence to refer to a ‘position’ held by a child’s parents (that their child should go to a school which offers an in-depth study of foreign languages), it is less natural to use it as a reference to a ‘position’ of a child. This does not mean that children are not capable of thinking about such a matter or that they cannot have their *mnenie* on it. Rather, it indicates that *sčitat’* refers to a very conscious way of thinking which involves considering the situation in general and being aware of consequences. Children at the age of six are generally not capable of performing such a level of cognitive analysis because they do not have the experience and knowledge of the world that is expected for a person to be able to *sčitat’*.

The use of *sčitat’* is indicative of a position that a person cares about. Component (g) in the explication states that it is a kind of ‘opinion’ that a person does not want to change. *Mnenie* is different because one can have a *mnenie* about something that one has not thought about previously but was asked about. For example, *opros občestvennogo mnenija* ‘public opinion poll’ implies that any citizen can be asked to express their *mnenie* on some controversial issue. Providing an answer to such a poll does not mean that a person has thought about such matters before, and yet it can be said that a person has a certain *mnenie*. *Mnenie* is something that a person might change and something that other people can influence, as the collocations *vyrabotat’ edinoe mnenie* ‘to develop a common opinion’ and *manipulirovat’ mneniem* ‘to manipulate the opinion’ suggest:

(37) *Odnako prežde ponadobitsja vyrabotat’ edinoe mnenie političeskoj i ekspertnoj ėlity o principax formirovanija i raboty kabinetov ministrov.*

However, first it will be necessary to develop a common view among the political and expert elite on how cabinets should be formed and how they should function.

(38) *V bylye vremena kommunističeskie lidery umelo manipulirovali mneniem mass i imeli s ėtogo žirnye dividendy.*

In older times communist leaders skilfully manipulated the views of the masses and reaped rich dividends from it.

*Mnenie* is something that can be stated at length. Thus, there are expressions like *vyražat’ mnenie* ‘express [one’s] view’, *vyskazyvat’ mnenie* ‘tell [one’s] view’, *zaščiščat’ mnenie* ‘defend [one’s] view’, which imply that articulating one’s view can take some time. *Sčitat’*, unlike *mnenie*, introduces a point of view which cannot be stated at length. To invite a person to say what he or she *sčitaet* one can say *Čto ty sčitaeš’?* ‘What do you think?’ or *Kak ty sčitaeš’?* ‘How do you think?’. *Sčitat’* does not collocate with verbs like *vyražat’* ‘express’, *vyskazyvat’* ‘tell’ or *zaščiščat’* ‘defend’, which imply some time in expressing one’s *mnenie*.

The closest frames in which *sčitat’* and *mnenie* can be compared are *Ja sčitaju, čto ...* ‘I believe that ...’ and *Po moemu mneniju, ...* ‘In my view ...’. I propose the following explication for *mnenie*:

[K] *Po moemu mneniju, [ty postupil pravil’no]*

‘In my view, you did the right thing’

(a) when I think about it I think like this: [you did the right thing]

(b) I can say why I think about it like this

(c) I know that other people can think not like this

This explication clearly shows that *mnenie* and *sčitat'* are semantically different. While component (a) in *mnenie* is almost identical with that in *sčitat'*, components (b) and (c) are different. Component (b) reflects the idea that *mnenie* can be stated and expressed in a relatively lengthy manner. Component (c) incorporates the idea that *mnenie* implies the possibility of different ways of thinking about the same matter. This explication also shows that *mnenie* can be explicated via *dumat'* and that it is different in meaning from *sčitat'*.

## Conclusion

The linguistic study of propositional attitudes reports as a window into human cognition cannot ignore the issue of their linguistic and cultural variation. Verbs expressing propositional attitudes are cultural constructs aligned with important cultural assumptions relating to ways of speaking and thinking. By accepting the English verbs like *to believe* as minimal semantic units in the analysis of propositional attitudes, scholars are introducing an Anglo bias into the analysis. This approach also disregards the issue of semantic complexity of the verb *to believe* and its equivalents in other languages. Consequently, treating *to believe* as a final atom of meaning in the analysis of propositional attitude reports distorts the results.

The research paradigm of the NSM offers an inventory of empirically established semantic universals which can be successfully employed in semantic and pragmatic analysis. The NSM primes in the domain of mental states, those of THINK, KNOW, and WANT, can serve as a language-neutral foundation in the analysis of propositional attitudes. NSM can be used to reveal 'mental architecture' of conceptualisation of mental states. It can also be further applied in cognitive cross-disciplinary research.

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# Modular, Cellular, Integral: A Pragmatic Elephant?

Jacob L. Mey

**Abstract** When talking about reference, our immediate reaction is to ask what is referred to, by whom, and how. Reference can be made in writing or in speech; in the former case, I can “refer” by putting together a list of “references” which will explain those references that are not immediately clear from the written context. In speech, by contrast, we need other means of referring (e.g., by quoting, by ostensive pointing, by the use of indexicals, by innuendo, by relying on the context, and so on). What this chapter wants to do is to connect reference with the idea that all speech acts, including those having to do with referring, are situated, that is to say, their explanation and understanding happens, so to speak, from the “outside” (the context) inward, rather than from the “inside” (the mind of the speaker) outward. The corollary of such a view is that speech acts, as such, do not exist; consequently, reference always happens in the form of a situated “pointing,” where the activity of referring always is a “situated” one, possible only in a total context of understanding: “the whole in which the components work” (Weigand 2006, pp. 59–87; quoted Capone 2010, p. 2863).

**Keywords** Pragmemes · Societal pragmatics · Speech acts · Language games

## 1 Introduction: An Elephant in the Chinese Room?

When I hear people talking about the confines of pragmatics, or I read papers that deal with “what pragmatics really is” (or should be), or when I am told that “pragmatic acts are indirect illocutionary acts” (Montminy 2010) and that consequently it is wrong to assume that the context determines the nature of a pragmatic act, I am reminded of the familiar Buddhist story about the three blind monks discussing the essence of the elephant. Being blind, the monks can only go about their tasks by

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feeling various parts of the beast. One monk maintains that the elephant essentially is no more than a surface of hairy hide, ending in a foot-like protuberance; the second monk thinks he is dealing with a colossal snakelike whip, swinging back and forth; and the third monk's elephantine feeling concerns a huge curved solid pipe. All three think they are right in their opinions, but what they have felt is only part of the whole: none has observed the interconnection between the various parts of the elephant, and the "beast as such" remains a mystery to them.

In the case of the three monks, what distinguishes them is their varying and limited angle of observation. They focus on different parts and fail to include the rest—that is, the whole. Something similar obtains when we look at how a scientist works in a laboratory. He or she uses a microscope to study the minute movements of bacteria and other protozoa; none of those movements make sense unless put in relation to the bigger picture; that is, how the bacteria affect the environment in which they live, and how they affect the host whose life they partly determine, partly are determined by. It is the context of the human or animal body that gives sense to the life of the bacteria. This is not to say that it is not a worthwhile thing to study bacteria *in vitro*; on the other hand, their growth and propagation are only interesting insofar as they affect the total environment of our world, including the outbreak of diseases and their treatment.

Or take the well-known fact that a mechanically reproduced picture consists of billions of exiguous "pixels" (picture elements) that only taken together make sense: the individual pixel is dependent on its neighbors in order to be understood, in the same way that the individual organism does not make sense unless seen in its total context. And this is truly what "contextualism" is all about, when opposed to all kinds of "minimalism"—the kind of "pragmatics" that Capone refers to in his introduction to the special issue on "pragmemes" in the *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(11), identifying writers such as Cappelen and Lepore as recent defenders of what is called "intentionalism," but which in the end turns out to be "a very meager, impoverished, and surely aseptic vision of linguistics" (Capone 2010, p. 2861).

Clearly, the idea that different aspects of language may be related in different ways and are situated in different divisions of linguistics is in itself not objectionable. But the discussion on whether we should conceive of pragmatics as a component rather than as a perspective seems by now rather dated. In particular, the modular view itself (according to which the various components of human language use should be seen as independently providing input to one another) has now been superseded by an even more radical approach, which I will call the "cellular" one. In this view, the module is not just self-governing, but its workings can be explained on the "subatomic" level of parameter setting. The analogy is taken from biology, where "internal selection" (the biological equivalent of parameter setting) is said to replace what is traditionally called "learning" and "instruction." As Piattelli-Palmarino (1989) succinctly expresses it, "there is no such thing as learning" (see Capone, *ibid.*, p. 2862). Counter to this, Capone remarks that even "parameter setting occurs in a social context" (*ibid.*). In other words, the "cellular" approach yields only partial and uninterpreted results that are without value for our understanding unless subsumed under an "integral" view of the processes in question: the whole elephant, nothing more nor less.



Given such an integrationist approach, there is nothing that prohibits us from studying the *maxima in minimis*, as Linné expressed it almost three centuries ago. In fact, the “maxima” can only be seen as realized in the “minima;” conversely, the “minima” make only sense in a “maximal” context. Thus, we may conclude, with Recanati, that “contextualism is perfectly compatible with the demands of compositionality” (Recanati 2010, p. 47) in the context of my approach; in other terms, the perspectival, outside-in, contextual approach and the inside-out, modular (as well as the cellular, if interpreted à la Linné) are only apparently in contradiction.

I have tried to unite the blind monks’ various “angles of observation” in one concept, that of the *pragmeme*, an act which, thanks to its Janus-like character, at the same time looks back (by decomposing) and forward (by integrating) the various parts of the pragmatic elephant that we are looking at; a touchstone for this view will be the notion of “reference,” which is the subject of the present chapter.

In the following sections, I will discuss the linguistic and philosophical problem of reference in relation to the notion of the instantiated pragmatic act or “pragmeme” (see Mey 2001, p. 208 ff.). My thesis is that reference is not restricted to the semantics of a language, as many philosophers and linguists have (often implicitly) assumed; rather, the problem is how to relate the language user and his or her language to the situation in which the language is being used—which is the premier issue in all of pragmatics. I underpin my thesis by recalling what happened some 30–40 years ago in the field of computerized language processing; a particularly apt illustration may be found in John Searle’s audacious thought experiment that became famous by the name of the “Chinese room,” and in the now somewhat dated (and mostly failed) efforts at constructing “expert systems” (ES) that were supposed to be able to take over the role of the human expert in many realms of life. I conclude by stating that referring (like indexing) is a specific human, user-oriented activity, which is not subject to a universal, abstract computational, linguistic, or other logic. And yes, Virginia, there is an elephant in Searle’s room.

## 2 Speech Acts and Situations

My point of departure is that no speech act is viable by itself. Speech acts as such do not exist, unless they are situated; which means that they cannot be said to have a unique reference, based on their linguistic (semantic) content: the same speech act can function in a multitude of ways, as the case of indirect speech acting shows.

With regard to reference, this is similarly not bound to the individual utterer and what he or she has in mind—not even to what he or she ostensibly defines as “the” referent. Reference making is a *situated* process (as is speech acting itself); what I have in mind as the reference for my utterance depends on what my interlocutors can have in mind as the possible referents for that utterance—and in fact on what the entire societal situation “represents” for me and my interlocutors.

What is called “reference by innuendo” provides a good example: even nonlinguistic behavior can be referential (a smile, a nod, a shrug, etc.). But all reference

must refer to the situation in which reference takes place; the single person making a reference establishes it only in connection with the other participants in the situation. In other words, the “Joe Sixpack” of recent political referrals is only one of the ‘pack’: references made by and to him as a single interactant miss the point that “he is one of us” (like his brother-in-spirit, “Joe the plumber”). Or rather, he *is* us, in the plural referentiality of the situation.<sup>1</sup>

The question now is how referentiality relates to the utterances proffered in a situation. If speech acts cannot be said to refer to a unique semantic or pragmatic content (compare the case of the indirect speech act), then how can we capture the regularities that we notice in our use of language when dealing with particular worldly tasks, such as making a request, offering apologies, thanking, or apologizing—the staple exhibits of classical speech act theory?

The next section explains in more detail how speech and situation work in unison to allow for what I call “pragmatic acting.”

### 3 The Force of the Situation

The answer to the question raised above is contained in what I earlier have referred to as the *situation*: the place where the linguistic interactants meet, not as disembodied “talking heads,” but as agents on the societal scene, bringing along their entire baggage of world knowledge: tacit and explicit presuppositions, expectations, and prejudices, as well as prior linguistic and world experiences.

As an example, take the case of what I have called “co-opting the audience” (See Mey 2001, p. 210 ff.). It goes like this: By referring to a situation and specifying its particular features either visually or auditorily, or both, I “groom” my interactant for a particular course of action. The technique is rampant in advertising: in a classic ad from the “seventies and eighties,” we see a man in Western garb, standing at the edge of a stream with his horse, a lasso draped over his shoulder: clearly somebody who knows his business and is about to take off on a manly task, like rounding up a herd of cattle. (See Fig. 1) This kind of situation is positively laden for many males: Who has not (as a boy, or even later) dreamt of being a cowboy and riding the range with “Old Faithful”? The language that accompanies the picture is the well-known slogan for a particular brand of cigarettes: “Come up to where the flavor is.” The particular brand itself is identified by the appearance of the well-known Marlboro Lights box of cigarettes in the bottom left corner of the ad.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The two “Joes” got to play a prominent, albeit rather ancillary, role during the 2008 US presidential campaign. Joe Sixpack in particular was thought of as representing the honest-to-God American worker who did not believe in all the political bullshit around him, and preferred his six-pack of beers to the lofty arguments of the politicians.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. “The most powerful—and in some quarters, most hated—brand image of the century, the Marlboro Man stands worldwide as the ultimate American cowboy and masculine trademark, helping establish Marlboro as the best-selling cigarette in the world.”

*The Advertising Century*. <http://adage.com/century/icon01.html>. Accessed on September 26, 2009.

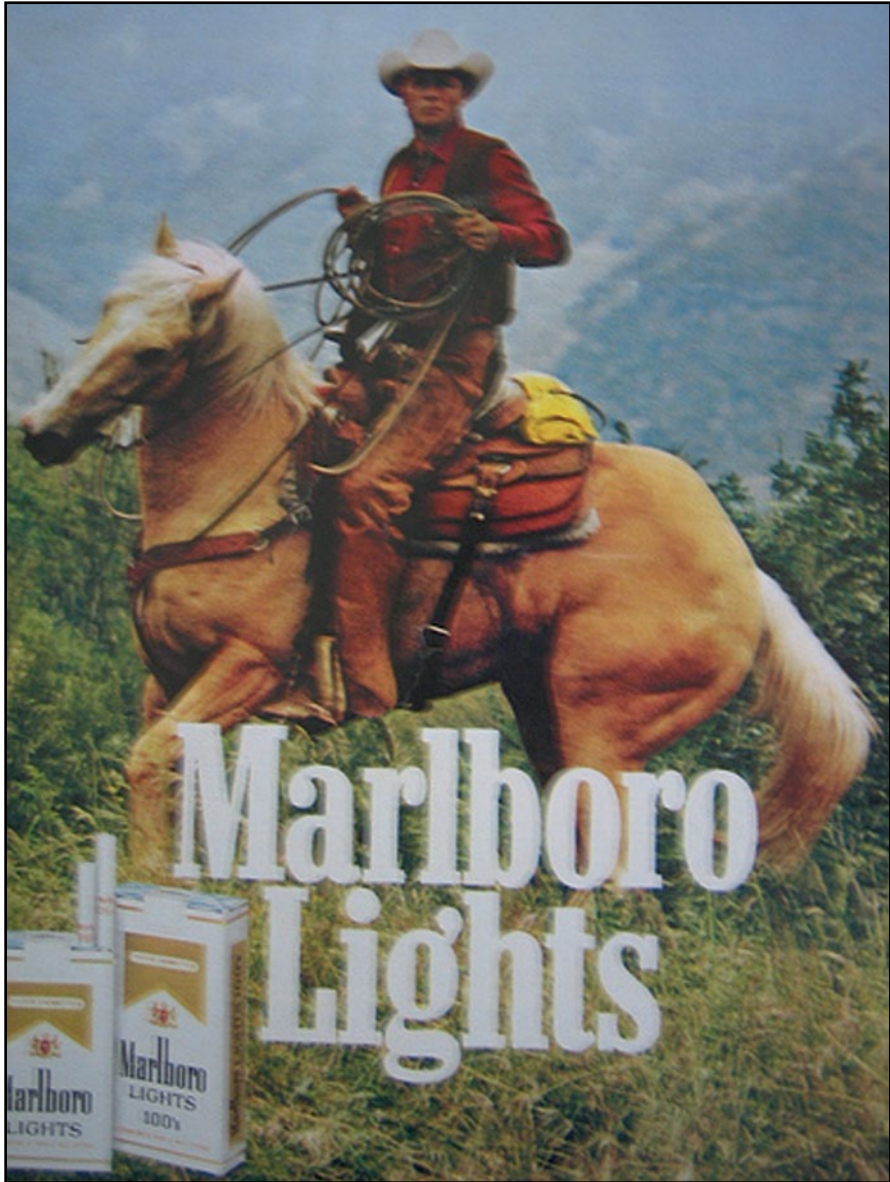


Fig. 1 The Marlboro Man

Note that in the advertisement, there is no mention of any direct speech act that would explicitly encourage a potential buyer to purchase this brand of smoking material. Still, given the situation, the advertising characteristic of the picture becomes clear: We are looking at publicity material rooting for a particular cigarette (ostensively referred to by the appearance of the Marlboro box). We are dealing

with a *situationally* bound and *situationally* conditioned act of advertising. This type of act I call “pragmatic,” because it does not necessarily involve any particular behavioral pattern (or “speech acting”): no predefined utterances, no standardized gestures, no typical “props”: it is all contained in the way the situation is “set up” (Mey 2001, p. 211) and the way the audience is similarly “set up,” themselves being entrapped in the setup.

Similarly, Sarah Palin’s references to, and worries about, “Joe Sixpack” were instrumental in setting up her presumed audience: voters thought to be “swayable” over to the Republican camp were implicitly drawn to identify with the “common man,” known from Aaron Copland famous 1942 orchestra piece *Fanfare for the Common Man*—a composition that “sought to hide class prerogatives behind a communal ideology” (Crist 2005, p. 53, quoting Burke 1935).

Palin’s act of referring was therefore more than a simple speech act; this kind of reference is part of a larger unit of action, a *pragmatic act* which formed part of Palin’s general strategy of “campaigning for the presidency,” rather than being just any old speech act, performed in the context of a Republican rally.

#### 4 Pragmatic Acts and Speech Acts

If it is true that our so-called indirect speech acts often, or even regularly, are clad in speech that has very little to do with the professed, verbal intention of the utterance, it must be the case that those acts derive their interactional value not from their semantic or lexical buildup, but from their position in a situation of speaking.

Speech acts, in order to have any effect, must be *situated*. As such, they are close to what Dell Hymes, some 40 years ago, called a “speech event”—a notion that has become a staple of the ethnological and anthropological literature ever since. The difference between a pragmatic act and what is called a “speech event” is that the former, as an instantiated and situated act, not only *depends* on the situation but also is itself *part* of the event; it shapes and conditions the speakers and the way they interact, and can interact, in the situation. In a particular societal situation, such as the university examination or the upscale restaurant, only certain acts are allowed; in addition, performing those acts (whether in speech, gesture, or otherwise) contributes to the establishment, respectively maintenance, of the situation as such and of the act contained in, and conditioned by it.

Such situated speech acts have more recently been dubbed *pragmatic acts* (Mey 2001, p. 220), because they rely heavily, not to say exclusively, on the situation of use, that is to say, on the situation where the users of a language unite in a “linguistic compact” that encompasses both themselves and their respective acts, as well as the entire situation, including the bystanders, innocent or otherwise. What we say, and what we understand, in such a situation is akin to what is called “abduction” in philosophy: we conclude, or infer, on the basis of not only *what* we hear or observe in the situation, but in accordance with our being “set up” *how* to hear and observe exactly that, being allowed to speak and behave in just those fashions that make sense in the situation.

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 the *general situational prototypes* of acts that are capable of being executed in a particular situation or cluster of situations. Such a generalized pragmatic act I have called a “pragmeme,” (Mey 2001, p. 221) in analogy with what the linguists have defined as the phoneme in phonology, the morpheme in morphology, and so on. Common pragmemes include such pragmatic acting as found in invitations, bribes, co-optations, incitements, and so on—all depending on the situation through which they are defined. As the Israeli sociolinguist Dennis Kurzon has remarked, “any utterance may constitute an act of incitement if the circumstances are appropriate to allow for such an interpretation” (1998, p. 28); what we are dealing with in this particular case is the *pragmeme* of “inciting.”

## 5 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.

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. However, since the semantics cannot do the job by itself, but needs to be complemented by pragmatic information, some theorists have introduced the notion of “pragmatic intrusion” (see Levinson 2000, p. 198 ff.; Capone 2008); but allowing for this unavoidable *post hoc* infiltration of semantics by pragmatic elements, makes for a bad case of doing things “ass backwards.” For even if you win the intrusion race, you will always be a semantic loser: you have voluntarily confined yourself to the accidental inventory of the language which happens to be your pet specialization.

By contrast, if you start with pragmatics, you are where the real action is: the users. As such, pragmatics always comes first: pragmatics constrains semantics, not the other way round. When I said “ass backwards,” I meant “taking a lexical item (or compound) and adding pragmatics.” The dangers and disadvantages of such an approach are neatly characterized by Jaszczolt, who remarks (2010, Sect. 2) that placing (semantic) truth-conditions on utterances can at most result in a “vague and murky speech act approach,” where “sentences may be allowed some more, or less, restricted types of pragmatic filling in, but only when [the] syntax [and I add: the semantics; JM] clearly dictate[s] them”—thus placing pragmatics irrevocably within the jurisdiction of semantics. This kind of “armchair semantics” works in accordance with the slogan “have item, need context”: it moves outwards from the (mental) “inside,” and tries to locate (or if needed, “armchair construct”) a suitable expression “out there,” in the real world. By contrast, pragmatics starts out

from the world of reality, the “outside,” and works its way inwards, to the mental representations: from the world of generalized pragmatic acts (or “pragmemes”), towards the individual, situated expression (or “pract;” see Mey 2001, p. 219 ff.).

## 6 Intrusion or Merging?

It seems natural that, rather than talking about “intrusion,” we should conceive of the relationship between pragmatics and semantics as a case of “merging information” (see Jaszczolt 2005, Sect. 2). The question is, of course, which merges with what; and consequently, how to conceive of the end product of the merger.

Nomenclature aside, it is clear that the final question is to determine what things mean in a situation. But this meaning can be conceptualized in different ways. For a pragmaticist, this is not first and foremost a matter of determining the generalized (or even particularized) meaning of an utterance, or of its individual segments: what these segments mean is always a function of their use in the situation, and of how they “merge” towards constituting the situation’s *pragmatic* relevance.

Jaszczolt’s *Default Semantics* (2005) is clearly a step in this direction, and her list of elements that contributes to a merger is rather similar to what I have proposed in my theory of generalized situational (pragmatic) acts, or “pragmemes” (Mey 2001, p. 222). Thus, Jaszczolt’s notion of a “compositional pragmatics” seems to be very close (at least in principle or intention) to what I have been propounding earlier. Rather than considering pragmatics as an “intruder” on the scene, whose rough boot prints disturb the neat circles of my semantic description, we should be prepared to welcome pragmatics as a liberating force, in the sense of an “emancipatory pragmatics” (see Hanks et al. 2009; Mey 2012). Pragmatics frees us from the straitjacket that traditional linguistics has forced upon our descriptions by encircling them with extraneous formalisms that in the end serve nothing but their own limited purposes of “simplicity” or other purported virtues of good linguistic activity (cf. Hjelmslev 1954).

The second portion of this chapter connects what has been said so far to the problem of *reference*.

## 7 The Question of Reference: Searle’s “Chinese Room”

In a comprehensive interpretation, “reference” means to refer to something by means of something: a gesture, a sound (articulate or not), or a general disposition of behavior (linguistic or otherwise; this is often called “indexing,” to be discussed in the next section). The point here is not to operate a fine distinction between the various kinds of referring; rather, what I am after is what reference *does*, in a given situation, and how we react to reference.

Let me take an example from the long-standing discussion on computers and intelligence among philosophers, linguists, and computer scientists, in particular workers in artificial intelligence (AI). In the early days of AI, John Searle once wrote a couple of classic papers, in which he discussed an imagined situation that came to be known as the “Chinese room” (Searle 1980a, b, 1984). The thought experiment embodied in the story of the “room” is intended to beef up Searle’s claim that a computer at most can *simulate* human intelligent behavior (the claim made by the defendants of “weak AI”), but that it can never truly emulate or *replicate* it (against the claim made by the proponents of “strong AI”).

Here is how Searle’s thought experiment works. Imagine a monolingual English-speaking person inside a closed room, who is given the task of processing incoming questions formulated in Chinese (which of course he or she does not understand). On receiving each Chinese character, the person refers to a little book of instructions, telling him or her which symbol to pick from an array of Chinese characters displayed elsewhere in the room. There is also a further set of instructions, telling the person which symbols go together so as to produce an acceptable Chinese output. This sequence of symbols is then replicated on a screen that is legible outside the room; in this way, the questioners receive their (hopefully satisfactory) answers.

The point of the exercise is to show that all of this processing (embodying what is called in AI parlance a “question answering algorithm”) happens without the person in the room having the slightest knowledge of Chinese. The answerer simply does not understand the questions, yet produces a reasonable, satisfactory answer, one that would successfully pass when subjected to a “Turing test.” This is a procedure in which a human judge engages in a natural language conversation with one human and one machine, each of which tries to appear human. All participants are placed in isolated locations. If the judge cannot reliably tell the machine from the human, the machine is said to have passed the test.<sup>3</sup> The test is named after the British computer scientist Alan Turing, who imagined a similar test as the crucial criterion for possibly differentiating human from nonhuman intellectual activity (Turing 1950). Consequently, the person in the Chinese room could be replaced by an artificial agent, a robot, or even a computer program, without the outcome of the experiment changing in the least.

In Searle’s view, however, such a “Chinese room agent,” even though his performance may be indistinguishable from a human’s, does not perform in the same way as does a human, precisely because he does not *understand* what he is doing: he is missing what Searle calls “intentionality,” the hallmark of human thinking and acting. In other words, the agent (and consequently, the computer program that simulates his activity inside the room) is indifferent to the outcome of the referring, since nothing had been *intended* by it. Nothing in the activity (or program) refers meaningfully to anything in the world; “meaningfully” here understood as “meaning attributed to the world by a human individual (or group of individuals),” i.e., intentions and volitions as possessed and handled by humans.

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from *Wikipedia*, 26 September 2009. For a recent perspective on the Turing test, see French 2012.

In our current framework, that of *reference*, the question adumbrated here is typically: “How do we know that the person inside the room is referring to the same entities in the world that the outside questioners have ‘in mind’?” As far as the Chinese input goes, the “insider” does not strictly *have* a mind; in addition, the various devices and instructions inside the room are not in the possession of, or equal to, any “mental” faculties, as we understand the term.

Consequently, many people inside the AI community have taken Searle as minimally embracing a “weak” version of AI, that is, the possibility of creating devices that operate in such a way that we could not distinguish them from humans operating in the same situations; such devices would indeed successfully pass a Turing test.

Whether or not this is a correct interpretation of Searle’s thought, I will leave aside here; I want to argue that there can be no doubt that Searle is denying the possibility of a “strong” AI. For Searle, the decisive criterion for human intelligence is not located in any mechanical testing procedure. Instead, he establishes it in what he calls “intentionality”: a typically human property, and one that is crucial for *understanding* reference.

## 8 Explaining and Understanding

Reference may, on the surface, be described by invoking well-known parameters from psychology, linguistics, and philosophy, for instance, by providing criteria for correct reference (such as using the appropriate gestures and sounds). In particular, these criteria concern the correct use of referring expressions such as the quantifiers “some,” “many,” and so on (as argued by Keith Allan in a recent paper; 2010). To my mind, however, *explaining* reference involves a higher level of human activity than merely *describing* it: to wit, the level of *understanding*.

The behaviorists will object that asking for such explanations is not a proper scientific activity, nor does it necessarily lead to better understanding; if we are given the facts and are able to describe them properly, our task as scientists should not involve ulterior demands, such as providing an explanation.

One of the prominent structural linguists of the mid-twentieth century, the self-described “stormy petrel of linguistics,” Robert A. Hall, Jr., expressed this clearly when he said that, once the facts were on the table, and they had been subjected to an exhaustive and satisfactory description, to ask for an explanation in terms of “understanding” would be unscientific, even “childish” (Hall 1975).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the famous Danish structuralist Louis Hjelmslev, founder of the Copenhagen School known as “glossematics,” has always claimed that the task of the linguist is limited to providing a description that is as exhaustive and simple as possible, while not containing any internal contradictions (Hjelmslev’s famous “three principles,” 1954).



## 9 The World of Expert Systems (ES)

Let me illustrate this general “descriptivist” and anti-mentalist attitude by referring again to the world of AI and computerized language technologies. During the 1970s of the past century, a great deal of enthusiasm was generated by a sudden breakthrough in the computer hardware sector, which made it possible to produce machines with computing powers that exceeded the machines that were then available by powers of ten or more. There was even talk about a “fifth generation” of supercomputers that would put an end to all known limitations on modeling the human brain. The computers would soon take over, and humans would be mere appendices to the machines (some of this rhetoric is alive even today, especially in the popular cultures of sci-fi and futuristic movies such as *Blade Runner*, inspired by William Gibson’s 1984 novel *Neuromancer*).

A special application of this line of thought was found in the design and construction of “expert systems” (ES). People with special knowledge of a particular branch of medicine, say nephrology, would be asked to put their knowledge at the disposal of the engineers, who would convert the knowledge in question to machine readable language and construct a computerized system (an ES), containing all the necessary information, such as detailed and illustrated descriptions of kidney disease symptoms, applicable diagnoses, possible prognoses, recommended treatments, and so on, making all of this available to the treating physician or nurse at the push of their fingertips. Many people were thus led to believe that submitting oneself to a diagnostic procedure using one of these systems would be better, and even safer, than consulting one’s family doctor (or even a specialist).

I discussed this matter with a number of AI specialists (who mostly were in agreement that ES were the way to go), but also with potential and actual users of the systems (who not all were equally sure). At the one end of the latter category, I found people like my own late brother, who once declared that he would rather be treated by an intelligent machine than by a dumb country doctor. At the other end, there was my American friend, the practicing nephrologist, whom I asked whether he actually had such an ES in his office, and whether he used it on a regular basis. In particular, I wanted to know to what extent he would trust the machine to provide a reliable diagnosis. His answer was affirmative to my first question (“no doctor these days could be without one [an ES]”): as to the second and third questions, he was much more cautious, and in the end, admitted that he mainly used his ES as a repository for his journals and observations, as well as for collecting his thoughts on subjects he might want to write about. However, he never would leave the sole responsibility for diagnosing a patient to the ES. For that purpose, he said, “we need a doctor, not a machine” (Fred Finkelstein, M.D., pers. comm.).

In my view, the reason for my friend’s rejection of the machine as a diagnostic device was precisely in the perceived difference between a superficial description and classification of the sick person’s symptoms on the one hand, and a proper understanding of the patient’s condition on the other; only the latter would allow a physician to establish a satisfactory diagnosis.

## 10 Reference and Referentiality

Let us now go back to the problem of linguistic reference. Identifying a particular item in an utterance (that is, establishing reference) is analogous to diagnosing a (number of) particular symptom(s) as pointing to a specific illness or syndrome. There, the identification only supplies the “common ground” for a diagnosis; the ultimate decision rests with the physician, who (on the basis of his or her experience) establishes the proper reference as a necessary, but by no means sufficient condition for successful treatment. Similarly in pragmatics, establishing “the validity of the quantificational analysis for definite NPs” in a purely linguistic framework (Allan 2010, p. 2919) is not necessarily the same as figuring out the point of the referring: The question is what this reference *does* in the particular situation.

In my understanding, referring is a *pragmatic act*, not just a linguistic or semantic operation such as identifying a definite or indefinite noun phrase (NP) by providing the correct quantification of an item such as *this* (“this here and now”) or *some* (“some, but not all”). These operations may be necessary in order to extract (some of) the information conveyed by the linguistic expression (“what or who is referred to”), but they are not sufficient, as they do not necessarily lead to understanding (“what some person is doing in this context and why”).

Observing Searle’s Chinese room, an innocent bystander might be baffled by the many correct answers that come out of the room, in light of the complete absence of any Chinese-competent agent within. The bystander might even be fooled into believing that there is a Chinese-speaking person inside the room (in an “inverse Turing test” move, if you wish to call it that). But all this is far below the level of what Searle calls “intentionality,” viz., the level at which we discuss and try to determine what is going on in the cognitive processes of human understanding. The behaviorists (and along with them, the structural linguists, *pace* their protestations of anti-behaviorism)<sup>5</sup> will tell you that there is nothing to look for beyond what one observes (at the level of “surface” linguistic structure), or necessarily infers (at the level of “deep” structure). But a simple observation of human behavior will tell you otherwise: What people intend to say is not always what they say, and conversely, what they say is not always what they intend to say. *Intentionality* is the big joker in this game, and it cannot be established as a simple correlation between two givens in an observed sequence of events.

## 11 Indexes and Indexicality

Searle’s Chinese room has been useful in pointing up some deficiencies in our reasoning about human cognitive processes; what is missing in his thought experiment (and for that matter, in standard descriptions of linguistic reference, as well as in

<sup>5</sup> Compare Chomsky’s early attacks on the venerated US psychologist B. F. Skinner, who for many became the very icon of a behaviorist approach to human cognition and psychology.

our thinking about ES) is the element of human non-predictability; that is, the way *humans* use reference. For this human property (which comprises, and indeed presupposes, Searle's intentionality), I will set aside the term *referentiality*. Since referentiality (just like intentionality) always and necessarily involves the user, it is typically a pragmatic property or activity. What we call "referring" is therefore first and foremost a *pragmatic act*; it is subsumed under the general concept of referentiality and includes the referring by symptoms, as discussed in the case of the medical ES.

Symptoms fall into the general category of what often are called "indexes." Charles S. Peirce originally defined the index as a sign based on similarity or contiguity, as in metaphor and metonymy (e.g., a symptom is an index of health or sickness). In the same way, the medieval philosophers of the School, following Aristotle, defined *urina* as a *signum sanitatis* (cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, 16, 6; 2000). But, as Peirce was careful to point out, an index (e.g., the urine) not only needs the "objective" connection to an object (e.g., the patient) but, in addition, a "subjective" relation to the observer; in this case, the physician who registers the symptom as a sign, and deals with it as such, on the basis of his or her experience and the total situation of the patient.

Indexes thus testify to our use of referring. In the case of language, use of a local dialect may index one's geographical or social origin; similarly, the choice of a particular expression may connote the speaker's attitude towards a social, political, or environmental phenomenon or situation. Thus, Republican participants in the 2008 US election debates were advised by the party leaders to use the neutral expression "climate change," rather than the ominous, but more accurate "global warming"—a term which indexes one's stance towards an irresponsible use of natural resources. *We* are the ones who cause "global warming," thereby promoting or triggering a "climate change;" this necessary link, or real-world reference, is either masked or revealed by our choice of indexical expression.

## 12 Reference and Collaboration

Indexicality is the way we use indexes to signify a relation to the thing indexed, or to express a particular attitude towards an indexed situation. Like referentiality, indexicality builds on the existence of a collaborative instance, the interlocutor, as it is often called in the literature on speech acts. This interlocutor is not merely a "co-speaker," as the word "interlocutor" seems to indicate; first of all, he or she is a collaborative *actor*; an "interactant." Conversely, referentiality, like indexicality, necessarily depends on the coactive construction of the reference or index in question—think of how in order to "get a joke," we must have the willingness and wherewithal to collaborate in co-constructing the joke.

A general principle in pragmatics is that in interacting, we rely on the common experience and cooperation of our partners. Language, when properly used, communicates something to somebody. This "something" may, but need not be, of a conceptual nature, e.g., a statement; alternatively, it may have to do with a feeling,

index a stance, or embody a reference. In all these cases, the pragmatics will not operate unless the communicative partner works along with us. Conversely, the cooperation provides the interlocutor with certain rights and privileges: he or she can withhold or withdraw cooperation, in which case communication stops; but normally, if cooperation is offered and ratified, the interactant becomes more than just a sounding board. In interacting, there are no exclusive, isolated subjects and objects: in “inter-action,” the action is co-created by the concerted efforts of the interactants.

The pragmatic act of referring, in particular, depends on the uptake that is effected by the reference. In the medical interview, for instance, the analysis of the symptoms and the recording of the anamnesis rest crucially on the constructed common understanding of the referred phenomena. By referring to a symptom in arcane, professional/medical terminology, a doctor may obstruct this cooperation, as the patient is not able to penetrate the reference; in terms of indexing, the physician in this case only exercises an abstract professionalism, but omits to index his or her openness to cooperate with the patient. In such an interactionally difficult or threatening situation, patients may not be able to identify their symptoms or reveal them to the physician (compare the well-known “white coat syndrome”). What is threatened here is not just the cooperation, but the medical consultation as a whole and, in the end, the healing process itself and its successful outcome for the patient. Conversely, we are now also able to understand why patients often offer valuable, indeed life-saving or life-threatening, information during informal talks with nurses or aides—information that they may have been withholding (perhaps out of anxiety or fear) from the doctor assigned to their case.

Finally, in what is perhaps the most interesting aspect of referring, the referrer acts on, and changes, not only the addressee but also the object or situation that is being referred to, just as the indexed situation changes its character in accordance with the way each individual interactant interprets the index. We cannot refer in and by ourselves alone: reference is only satisfactory and complete when a common interpretation for all referred items has been established. In other words, referentiality presupposes a collaborative effort, and by that token, it is a true pragmatic act.

### **13 Conclusion: The Dialectics of Referring**

Like all pragmatic acting, reference depends to a great extent on the use of language in a situation that is determined by the interactants and the environment. Situations impose certain (albeit varying) limitations: thus, one cannot properly refer to that which is in principle unknown to oneself or to one’s interlocutors (former US Vice-President Dick Cheney’s “unknown unknowns” provide a stellar example; the point has been stressed by, among others, the late Akio Kamio in his analysis of the “territory of information;” Kamio 1997). For instance, colors do not constitute a proper reference frame for those who do not have the privilege of eyesight. Relying on one’s color experience when dealing with a blind person is fraught with dangers; nor can a speaker properly refer to an interlocutor’s inner state (physical or mental).

For instance, the commonly heard complaint among married and other couples, “You don’t love me any more,” makes no sense in terms of referentiality: there is no way for the speaker to access the other person’s mental or emotional situation. Uttering a phrase like that amounts to committing not only a social gaffe but, in certain cultures, like the Japanese, also a linguistic one (see Kamio 1994).

People are, of course, able to talk about things without entirely understanding them, as in the case of the Greek astronomers who talked intelligently about the planets, yet lacked the proper understanding of their nature and function. Consider the famous case of Archimedes’ understanding of the “evening star” (called Phosphorus, literally the “light-bearer”) being identical to the “morning star,” called Hesperus (literally “the bearer of dawn”): as has been common knowledge ever since, both Phosphorus and Hesperus are manifestations of the planet Venus.

While Archimedes was unaware of the way the planets, including our own Terra, relate to the Sun, his understanding was sufficient to establish a framework of reference which many centuries later could be used by Frege to illustrate his celebrated distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*. In cases like these, reference is often by “proxy” or “second hand”: we know about things, we know where to place them, and even are able to predict their behavior; yet we do not *know* them in the sense of “understanding” or “experiencing” them.<sup>6</sup>

Since all understanding comes from experience,<sup>7</sup> what we do not know can only be understood by a “leap of faith,” as it is said in many religious traditions (cf. the Christian Bible’s “Faith is...the evidence of things not seen,” *Heb.* 11:1). My pragmatic version of this “leap” specifies that it cannot be taken alone (as Martin Luther seemed to think): faith is only pragmatically effective in concert with a community of practice, the believers. Similarly, the community of language practitioners guarantees the proper use of reference by a correct interpretation of the context, just as St. Paul’s “evidence of things not seen” can only be discovered through collaborative interaction: indeed, faith itself “cometh by hearing,” as the Apostle has it elsewhere (*Rom.* 10:17).

More generally, all pragmatic *acting* is only possible in the dialectics of *interaction*. Rather than “reducing pragmemes and pragmatic acting to types of illocutionary (and perhaps perlocutionary) speech acts” (Allan 2010), I maintain that the essence of these acts is not captured by their typology or description, but is contained in the way they are exercised in the situation. Creating a reductive

<sup>6</sup> As when in *Gen.* 3, Adam is said to have “known” Eve. (Hence, the expression “carnal knowledge” for sexual intercourse).

For a literary illustration, recall Heinrich Heine’s famous poem about the Loreley:

Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten  
Dass ich so traurig bin;  
Ein Märchen aus uralten Zeiten  
Es will mir nicht aus dem Sinn.

Here, “sense” and “meaning” are beautifully distinguished: The poet knows the “meaning” of the words of the fairy tale, but this meaning does not make “sense.”

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the Scholastic adage “Nothing is in the mind that not has been experienced by the senses” ( *nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu*; St. Thomas Aquinas *De veritate* 2, 3, 15; 2008).

typology of speech acts at best only achieves a “better” (in the sense of more accessible) description of those acts; but at the end of the day, such a description can only claim to be “better” in terms of completeness and superficial accuracy. In contrast, the theory of pragmatic acts invokes the *interactive* aspect that is characteristic of language in use, irrespective of whether or not this use includes, as a necessary condition, the obligatory use of speech acts and other features of linguistic expression. It is precisely this *interactive* aspect which establishes the concept of the pragmeme as a sound way of accessing the problems of reference.

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# What Can Pragmatics Learn from the Law? (On Recanati's Cases of Modulation, Indirect Reporting, and Cancellability of Explicatures)

Alessandro Capone

**Abstract** This chapter is a contribution to societal pragmatics, as intended (and defended) by Jacob L. Mey (*Pragmatics. An introduction*. Oxford, Blackwell, 2001). The approach to this chapter is mainly Wittgensteinian as I am interested in conditions of use and how these can have effects on pragmatic inferences. By investigating the law and pragmatics, I end up with a radical Wittgensteinian conception of what the language game of modulation is. When the term of art 'modulation' was introduced by Recanati (*Literal meaning*. Cambridge, CUP, 2004), it was merely thought of as a pragmatic inference and not as a language game. I will explain, after the application of pragmatics and the law to the concept of modulation, how it can come about that modulation can be considered a language game. In this chapter, I also reconsider indirect reporting as a societal practice, and I expatiate on reporting rules or rule-based decisions. I finish the chapter by briefly reconsidering cancellability of explicatures.

**Keywords** Inferential pragmatics · Neo-Gricean pragmatics · Explicatures · Pragmatics and law

## 1 Introduction

This title, as anyone is likely to notice, is very ambitious, and I doubt that a short chapter like this can do justice to such an immense and critically important question. However, if, by addressing this question, we can hope to make considerable and important progress in understanding the limits and possibilities of pragmatics, then we should proceed in this direction, step by step, and even a short chapter like this can be an ulterior step in the right direction.

Before getting into the details of the chapter, it will be important, I think, to notice that, parallel to studies in pragmatics by philosophers and linguists, we now have a rich reservoir of studies in which pragmatics has been or is being applied by

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theorists of the law to the interpretation of legal texts promising to radically change our conceptions of the pragmatics of language (intended as a discipline)—perhaps even our deepest convictions about pragmatic theory. We should thus be open, at least in theory, to the idea that examining the issue of the application of pragmatics to the law may lead us to sketching a new theory of pragmatics (as language use). Of course, it is possible in theory to deny that the interplay of the two fields is likely to lead to (such imagined) drastic changes, as one may hide one's head in the sand and fail to see the consequences of this interdisciplinary inquiry. It is surely possible to argue for the separation of the two areas of inquiry on the grounds that they require different methodologies.

However, is it not evident that studying the law involves applying notions of meaning that belong to semantics and pragmatics? Is it not evident that if enough parallels can be established between pragmatics and law studies, then these parallels should point to some consolidated common structure? (I accept positive replies to these questions). I think that at this stage, we should be open both to the idea that pragmatics is likely to be radically altered by studying the law and to the idea that changes can be contained, restricted, and limited. It is a matter of prudence that we should proceed with this attitude to research.

## 2 A Brief Note on Intentionality

Intentions are ubiquitous and pragmatics cannot do without them.<sup>1</sup> When a speaker proffers an utterance, she normally intends her utterance to be addressed to someone in particular (or in general) and she normally communicates a piece of information intending it to be relevant to the hearers and usable by the latter for the purpose of revising, extending, or even deleting some of their beliefs. Such new or extended beliefs can be the point of departure of a certain action on the part of the hearer (perlocutionary effects may be part of the intended effects, but are generally optional). We can say, following Dascal (2003) and Fish (2005), that such an utterance is *animated* by a certain intention. I have always thought that the notion of an utterance being animated by an intention is of the utmost importance—without a certain intention, in fact, there would not be such an utterance (so the intention is motivational and animates the utterance in this motivational sense): If the utterance is actually proffered, it communicates an intention to vocalize a certain piece of information, to be utilized by an addressee. So, there must at least be three types of intentions: (1) the intention of addressing a certain hearer; (2) the intention of informing a hearer by passing on a certain piece of information; (3) the intention of achieving a certain purpose by passing to the hearer a certain piece of information, such as, minimally, the purpose of having the information passed to the hearer.

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<sup>1</sup> The literature on intentionality is wide, starting from the canonical Gricean texts. However, this paper was greatly influenced by the Wittgensteinian considerations in Cimatti (1999), which I adapted to the purpose of this chapter.

Now, this unusual model captures very well a point which Marcelo Dascal (2003) has been struggling to bring home to his readers: The speaker has a duty to make herself understood. A speaker who constructs her message in such a way that she willingly prevents the hearer from understanding it (say, by using difficult Latinate words or complex syntactic structures such as triple occurrence of negation<sup>2</sup>), may only be said to pretend to want to communicate a message to her hearer, while she probably intends to hide this information. Intention (3) is not a trivial addition to the picture, because it adds a communicative dimension not achieved by simply positing (1) and (2), communication being understood as a process, whose *telos* is the actual understanding of a message on the part of the hearer. We could probably articulate further intentions of the type (3) by adding a clause to the effect that the speaker must ensure that the understanding of the message and the message which a speaker actually attempted to communicate are the same—or at least there should not be too vast a gap between the two things.

A speaker may depart from literal meanings in a number of ways, say by being ironic, hyperbolic, metaphoric, or by requiring interpretative practices such as narrowing or broadening. Literal meanings may well have a modest role in language, but they play a useful role. We may say that a speaker intends to speak or be understood literally, on certain occasions. Prefacing one's speech with the formulation 'I literally mean' or 'I want to be taken literally' or 'I am speaking literally' attest to the fact that literal meanings are a rarity in language use—but these cases do exist. In fact, they are a point of departure, for the hearer, who must rely on conventions to penetrate the shield of non-literality offered by ordinary language use. Now, in the context of this chapter, it would be useful to say that what is taken for granted in ordinary language (the rarity of intended literal meanings) is the opposite of what happens in the law, where the intentions of the lawmaker can hardly be said to be ironic, although interpretational narrowing or broadening of meanings is not a rarity there. The lawmakers make themselves understood in virtue of frames (of a general type) guiding the interpretation process(es) and which proscribe non-literal interpretations such as ironic or non-serious interpretations (it would be silly to explain why this should be the case).

In general, applying Dascal's (2003) considerations to the law, the lawmakers should do their best to ensure that they make themselves understood, which means trying to be as explicit as possible concerning intentions *unless* some strategic purpose is being served by not being careful or precise enough about language or the words used. It means avoiding obscure texts or interpretative ambiguities. But this does not amount to saying that the amount (or quantity) of implicitness is severely limited. Furthermore, it means—a point that is not often noted—ensuring that the author of the legal text will not strive to make the text obscure on purpose. (Recently, Italian law compelled the public administration to use a language which is less formal and closer to the people's possibilities of understanding it).

As Endicott (2013) says, strategic vagueness can be used, especially when the legislature wants to delegate power to the courts—in which case interpretation in-

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<sup>2</sup> I found a case of triple negation in Evans' (1982) 'The varieties of reference'.

volves resolving potential ambiguities or resorting to narrowing or broadening of meanings, not to mention the saturation of variables. I will not rehearse the cases in which a law turned out to be obscure or vague and the courts had to determine its precise interpretation, either by following the strategy of fidelity to the purpose of the law or the strategy of *protecting* the beneficiaries of the law from texts that though unclear could be binding and could involve, if intended a certain way, transforming the defendant into a criminal.

Intentions constitute the basis for the interpretation of the law, although it should be clarified that it is not individual intentions we should be busy about, in discussing the law and pragmatics. Collective intentions are reflected by statutes, which are accepted by the majority of voters. Sometimes, even non-collective intentions must be presumed, especially when it is clear that a statute went through various committees, voting procedures, and was indeed finally voted due to a compromise, often of a linguistic type, a text which was chosen as a result of compromise and which, in so far as it is not complete (fully determinate), delegates authority to the courts.

I will warn readers who think that the interpretational business in the law is merely a linguistic task, by reminding them that, since Hart's (1958, 1981) judicious considerations, matters of public policy or morality can supersede linguistic considerations (pace Carston 2013). As an extreme but persuasive example, consider the cases of trials of Nazi war criminals who had abided by the rules of the law, but nevertheless were found guilty of having contravened natural law (Hart 1958). I will not deal with this issue, aware as I am that it deserves a paper of its own.

### 3 Lawmakers and Interpretation

What is characteristic of the pragmatics of online conversation (or communication) is that social linguistic interactions occur as an online process. By 'online process', I mean a process whereby the speakers' intentions are constructed as the conversation proceeds, that is at the time of utterance or shortly after. This is not to say that reflective processes extending back to what was said minutes or hours ago are not possible. Surely, we can stop and think 'What did the speaker mean by that?' or 'Perhaps he meant something different from what I understood'. However, these reflective 'a posteriori' processes are relatively rare. One is under the constraint to use a theory of interpretation to come to terms with what is meant at the time at which the speaker said what he wanted to mean (the dimension of *now* is imperative in ordinary conversation).

Instead, the law usually consists of written texts, whose interpretation may take years and may amount to a collaborative process—a judge or a court being able to decide that relevant past cases should have a bearing on the present one (in the case of common law systems). Furthermore, the legislatures, by enacting a legal text (say a statute), are speaking not only to the current beneficiaries of the law but also to beneficiaries of the law living in different periods of time, in different historical contexts, etc.

Now, if a statute is still valid—in that it has not been explicitly abrogated—it still has a meaning which may partially be a function of the new context in which the text is active (or operative). So, we expect a dialectics to be set up. On the one hand, one needs to take into account the original context to see what the legislator's intentions were; on the other hand, one needs to inspect the new context in which the law is operative. The question that now arises is: How does the new context affect the law in question? And now a more general question to be addressed is: How can the law be something generated by the legislator's intentions and something which has a life of its own in the new context in which it is inserted (and is operative). The law looks like a *living creature* (a *form of life*, in the Wittgensteinian sense?), which has a predictable evolution—an evolution whose limits are established by the intentions of the legislature and whose outcome in relation to the contexts encountered is one that would have had been approved by the legislature, had they had the opportunity of checking and approving of the development of the law. Yet, the text does not change; it is only the dynamics of interpretation that rejuvenates the text. This is a process that can be called 'rejuvenation'. A priori one could say that this process is not unlike the one that pertains to the interpretation of literary texts (the similarity was noted by Fish 2005). Although very often, scholars in law studies express analogies between interpretation of the law and the interpretation of literary texts, I doubt that the parallels are more than superficial. It is crucial that decisions by the courts—in virtue of which the law evolves like a living organism—should *not* be arbitrary and should not be creative in the sense of interpretation of creative writing (but they may be creative in the sense of adapting to new contexts). The interpretation of literary texts is often—if not always—open, as the motivated interpretation by scholars may be said to exist side by side with authorial intentions, as evinced in official schemas approved by the authors (say the schema of Ulysses by James Joyce). Now, although the interpretation of the law is open-ended insofar as there can be no stop to the growth of this living organism, it is not open to the same extent or in the same way as the interpretation of literary texts is. There are limits to the interpretation of the law—and these are set up by the rational nature of the enterprise. We may think of the lawmakers, the legislators—the abstract group of a legislature who have enacted a statute (or other kind of legal text)—as rational agents that had to resolve a specific problem in a rational way: in such a way as to maximize social good or usefulness and to abide by abstract principles set out in a constitution or belonging to the spirit of the legal culture in which the lawmaker is immersed. The lawmaker is, in a sense, an impersonal entity very close to the attributive characterization 'whoever is the rational lawmaker' (see Dascal 2003). The interplay between a referential and an attributive or quasi-attributive consideration of the lawmaker makes it necessary that original intention and innovation work in tandem to constrain the development of the living organism of the law. It is the interplay of referential and quasi-attributive properties that has most immediate and strong effects on the process I have called 'rejuvenation'.

In an interesting article on the meaning of original meaning in the American Constitution (Greenberg and Litman 1998), the authors explain changes in the meaning of a constitution on the basis of the distinction between meaning as a con-

cept (or as concepts) and the applications of a concept (also see John Perry's (2013) ideas on this issue).<sup>3</sup> For example, although the American Constitution bans practices that inflict unnecessary pain to human subjects (practices which are meant to be cruel or are represented as being cruel), it is clear that at different times in the history of the American people, flogging or ear cropping were considered permissible or otherwise illegal treatments of students (who failed to comply with the school rules). It is not the case that the meaning of 'cruel' has changed over the years (or centuries). It is the different applications of the concept 'cruel' that have changed.

Now, it is true that this discussion would deserve ulterior deepening, but this is the most important case showing how a statute or a constitution can be rejuvenated as an effect of its operation in different contexts where different beliefs on how to apply a concept are (or were) operative.

Another case to be discussed in this connection, bearing a similarity to the facts just described, is the use of strategic vagueness to ensure that a statute be applied in different contexts in different ways by different courts. While it is usually the case that courts must defer to the legislature (as argued by Scalia 1997), Endicott (2001, 2013) believes that strategic vagueness is a tool used to adapt a certain content of the law to situations that are always new and unpredictable and somehow different from the cases for which the legislature enacted the law (in question). Is not this a case of the legislature delegating power to decide on the interpretation of the law to the courts? In other words, the legislature knows that in some cases the court can adapt the statute to the context in which a decision is taken. The courts in these cases play a creative role and the legislature delegates power to the courts which are more likely to take the best possible decisions in consonance with the (spirit of the) policy established or chosen by the lawmakers in enacting the law. The case of interpreting the law is one in which the court has to interpret the spirit of the law, putting themselves into the shoes of the lawmakers and taking the decisions which a most rational lawmaker could take on the issue. Now, while Supreme Court Judge Scalia (see Carston 2013), in several cases, condemns the practice of resorting to the model of the rational lawmaker because this will allow the judge to use discretionary powers, bending them to her personal opinions, I would like to stress that a rational lawmaker, which the court must be able to simulate in taking decisions, is not and should not be a representation of a specific judge, but should be a representation of a maximally conscientious judge immersed in legal culture and who will do her best to understand what policies are most rational or acceptable in terms of social

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<sup>3</sup> Perry (2013) provides interesting considerations on the cruelty of keeping people in prisons for long periods of time. His discussion is interesting and mingles with linguistic considerations on implicit arguments, because for him an important aspect of understanding 'cruel' is saturation of the variable in the implicit structure 'cruel at t'. Clearly, different results can be obtained if t is the time of the constitution or if t is the time (any time) of subsequent readings. In Perry's discussion of original meanings, it is important that the applications of the concept 'cruel' be seen in the context of the person or society who applies the concept. I think this paper fully exploits the consequences of Perry's extremely interesting ideas. (The paper by Greenberg and Litman, important as it is, does not contain the linguistic suggestions that should be taken into account in applying their theory. Their theory can only work if the linguistic considerations by Perry are accepted.)

utility and what policies the legislature had in mind (an idealized representation, as Dascal (2003) would have to admit). There must be an objective framework of decision—sometimes a linguistic decision—in which a decision must be operative in interpreting the enacted law.

Canons of construction often play a role, albeit not a decisive or definitive one, in taking the most objective decisions. Canons of construction, contrary to what Carston (2013) says, perhaps simplistically, are *not* parallels of Gricean maxims or of cognitive principles. We can think of legal culture—to which canons of construction belong—as being modularized (Karmiloff-Smith 1996), being built into a mental module of the mind of a judge who knows how to use the legal culture in question and has specific know-how—a result of explicit, patient training in which correction appears as negative feedback. (Furthermore, a mental module is transferrable by training from one lawyer to another.) Given this modularized view of canons of construction, I doubt that pragmatic principles operate directly on the handling of certain decisions by a judge, although I admit that they have an indirect influence over the construction of canons of construction and relevant know-how.

Going back to ideas expressed earlier, which I judge to be of some importance, I think that the *rejuvenation* process of the law at the hands of the courts is objectively constrained by the intentions of the legislature. The rejuvenation process, in a sense, is one in which the original intentions of the legislators (or of the founding fathers of a constitution) must constrain the interpretation process all the way down to the present. We must ask ourselves whether the original legislature would have approved of the decision taken by a court. Although there is no way of checking in practice, ideally a *simulation* process (along the lines of an extension of Goldman 2006, based on Dascal's (2003) notion of the rational lawmaker) should be permissible. Anyone with the same legal culture, with knowledge of the original purposes of the law, of the changes in beliefs concerning the application of concepts contained say in a statute (provided that they are shared widely)—should be able to go through a simulation process to check whether the legislature would have approved of the final decision of the court, on the presupposition that it shared with the court certain general beliefs attributed to current society. To provide a simple example, we can predict how the founders of the American Constitution would have dealt with practices such as ear-cropping or flogging as practiced today, even if such practices were tolerated at the time the Constitution was written. Widespread changes of beliefs about what counts as cruel—the infliction of unnecessary suffering seen as a sadistic practice—would allow us to predict that it is consonant with the spirit of the founding fathers that they no longer would have tolerated the practice of flogging in schools (suppose that a psychology team, assigned the task of studying the long-term effects of flogging students, finds out that those subjected to flogging achieved the poorest results in terms of social mobility, then even the most obstinate of the parliamentary members would have to recognize that flogging is merely a cruel exercise of sadism). This is a simple simulation, which requires being immersed in legal culture, being in contact with the true spirit of the Constitution and accepting

the current widespread beliefs that the application of severity which does not result in any payoff is useless and, therefore, cruel because inflicted for no purpose.

#### 4 Applications to Ordinary Language: Recanati's (2004) Notion of Modulation

Now, we will try to apply all this to ordinary language. Ordinary language, like the language of the law, is not static but is a *living organism*.<sup>4</sup> We assume, like Recanati (2004), that a formidable mechanism for language change (and meaning expansion or extension) is 'modulation'. Now, is there a chance that modulation could be considered an instance of a modularization process? (The formation of a mental module that systematizes knowledge acquired by being exposed to experience?) One knows how to extend the uses of a certain word, having mastered a number of principles of use—presumably derivable from an innate cognitive system (as explained in Relevance Theory) or principles of rational cooperation (Grice 1989). We predict that a modulation process has some constraints. Consider the word 'open', brought to our attention by Recanati (2004) in his work on modulation processes (which I found intriguing, yet incomplete). I can open a window, a door, a book; I can open a wound, etc. All of these actions are similar, but they are all different, in some respects. It is even hard to find out what they have in common and one could doubt that these uses have a common denominator, although it is reasonable to look for one. Now, it is clear that there are some obvious limits to this modulation process. To mention the most important one: 'open' (verb) cannot end up having the same meaning as 'close', as a presupposition of modulation processes is that the application uses (of the concept) are 'related' somehow (but not by a relationship of antonymity).

Now, remember the distinction between concepts and applications of concepts. This is what leads to rejuvenation of a statute or a constitution (in ways that we believe the original lawmakers would have approved). When we say 'I opened a window' or 'I opened the door', I am using applications of the concept 'open' that, we imagine, would have been approved by the original users of the concept (suppose we belong to a second or third generation of users). The new applications of the concept are useful in that they provide substitutes for words that do not exist (as yet) and which must exist to fulfil the purposes of the communicative process as applied to new contexts. Remember further what happens in the case in which the legislature enacts a law by delegating authority to the courts. They are delegating power to the courts in order to account for new exigencies which were not predicted (or predictable) at the time a statute was enacted or published. In other words, vague concepts are (paradoxically) a flexible tool to handle unpredictable cases through deference or delegation to the courts.

<sup>4</sup> I am indebted to Perry (2013) for this view of language in legal texts. I then extended the analogy to ordinary language.

Assuming that a use of ‘open’ can be singled out as being central, we should ponder on how the extended uses can be derived from it using the notion of ‘application’. What is an application? An application of a concept (say of ‘open’) is a use of a concept involving a difference—say some narrowing or broadening—but such that the new extended concept will be perceived as differing minimally from the original concept. But of course, by recursive applications of the same concept, even granting that the difference between an initial concept and the subsequent one is minimal, given a series of new extended concepts proceeding one step at a time, using the notion or requirement of minimality, some conspicuous difference may start to emerge from the first concept of the series of applications and the last one of the series. And yet, there should be a rule of use that, conspicuous though the difference might be, there should be something about the last concept of the series that meets the constraints of the first concept of the series. Let us say that if some dimensions such as function or purpose are kept in mind, extensions of some original concept will be severely constrained by such a dimension. (Keep in mind the series of numbers used by Wittgenstein in the *Blue Book*, discussed some pages later. As the series proceeds, there are differences in the application of the rule, but some similarities persist, which can be captured by keeping in mind the function of the rule on which the series is based.)

A process similar to constitutional rejuvenation occurs with verbs like Recanati’s ‘open’. The original language users (who are similar to lawmakers in establishing conditions of use) enact conditions of use that are broad enough to allow new users (or new generations of users) to deal with cases or contexts that are similar enough to, but not completely identical with those encountered by original users. On various occasions, I have called this process ‘amplification’ but now, seeing the parallels with the law, I prefer to use the term ‘adaptation’ or ‘delegation of authority’. In every transition from a generation of users to the next, there is a process of delegation of authority. But this process must abide by certain rules. The new rules must ensure that the original users would have approved of the new use (including its efficacy), as seeing it useful, as fulfilling an important function, and as seeing it as a natural extension of a previous use (a natural extension might capture the idea that the distance between the original and the new use is not so great and one that can be bridged by means of some common rule). Clarifying what is a natural extension of a certain use or the simulation of the original speaker’s approval of a certain use is a difficult, Herculean task, something which cannot be attempted here. However, considerations similar to the case of the law must hold. The new users must be immersed in the culture of the original users. They must be able to see the original purpose of that use and how that old use can cover a new situation. They must be able to see a similarity between the purpose of the current use and the purpose of the original, previous use. There must be similarities between the original context of use and the new context of use. The differences between the two contexts of use should not be such that an antonym can be interchanged with the new use of a concept. The similarities between different uses could perhaps be captured at the level of entailments (see Lo Piparo 2013). Consider the following:



1. I opened the door.
2. I opened the window.
3. I opened the wound.
4. I opened the book.

It is a common entailment of (1), (2), (3), and (4) that if I did not manage to do what I intended to do in carrying out any of the actions specified, the object of the verb would remain not opened, but closed.

This common entailment is a deference to original meaning. So, I conclude by saying that the applications of concepts involved in modulation à la Recanati require that the original speakers create or divulge conditions of use, allowing the speakers of subsequent generations to apply concepts to new and unpredicted or unpredictable situations. They thus delegate power to new users, reserving the right to check the application of a modulation process as consonant to their original intentions (or to have such consonance checked through simulation processes by reasonable or rational language users). The new users, who have appropriated the know-how of modulation through modularization processes, extend the uses of the old concepts, but they defer to original intentions by ensuring that a basic set of entailments is shared by the original and the new users. Deference is also shown in accepting the obvious limitation that extensions of meaning should never result in antonyms, but this is obviously and invariably the consequence of accepting that a basic set of entailments must be shared by the original and the extended uses.

How can cultural innovations (or changes) have a bearing on the operation of pragmatic modulation? Are the new uses the result of new technological achievements? Are the new uses the result of cultural innovation? In the same way in which cultural changes have rejuvenated the meaning of the word ‘cruel’, I expect that similar changes have rejuvenated the meanings of other terms. Consider the case of a book that can be opened. To open a book, in my version of Italian, *aprire* can mean on certain occasions to study a book or to browse through a book. A student who does not open a book is someone who is lazy and reluctant to study. It is interesting that a metaphorical use of ‘open’ is related to this use of open as ‘studying’. One can say ‘*Lo studio apre molte strade*’ (lit: studying opens (up) many avenues). But the belief that studying is instrumental to one’s career is only a recent idea, dating back to the 1960s, when people realized that instruction was a way towards social emancipation. This belief was rare, say, when my mother was a student. Notice that by reference to this relative recent cultural change (in beliefs), one feels the relatedness of ‘*aprire un libro*’ and ‘*aprire una strada*’, as the one is instrumental towards the other. Now, it is clear that modulation à la Recanati is sensitive to (and a function of) cultural changes. The meanings of words are being rejuvenated by new applications of them, due to the evolving culture.

Consider now the word ‘*studente*’ (student) in Italian. This word has undergone an evolution and an involution. Crowded schools or universities have caused an inflation of culture and expertise—and thus from an occupational perspective, a student is not necessarily one having brilliant prospects. Being a student is becoming associated with being poor or badly paid. Thus, it would not be surprising if one

replied to the question, ‘How much do you earn?’ with the words ‘I am a student’, which would carry the implicature ‘I am poor’.<sup>5</sup> This case illustrates well the notion of modulation in terms of the implications we drew from the law (and the notion of original meaning). The applications of a concept may well be the result of cultural changes, which rejuvenate the concept, at least at the level of what is being implicated, though not necessarily at the level of consolidated semantic meaning. However, if the previous considerations are taken seriously, we should refrain from speaking of consolidated meanings too often, as it is clear that meanings are in constant flux and that the applications of certain meanings (which are influenced by cultural changes) promise to keep meanings in a perpetual state of flux.

Now we can see why we should consider ‘modulation’ a language game and not just a pragmatic inference or an explicature. A language game is a societal practice, based on some form of a rule, shared by (or playable by) members of a community of speakers. Playing a language game involves some form of cooperation or collaboration among members of the community (communicating is part of a language game). Pragmatic inference can be considered a language game because it is heavily constrained by cultural considerations, by some rule which the members of the community share and abide by, and because it presupposes some cooperation between members of the community which used a certain word or linguistic item before and members who used it later. A use can be considered a *precedent*—in the same way as a case of interpretation of the law by a court can be considered a precedent by a different subsequent court—and as such it influences future uses by establishing a rule of use, which is basically the idea that subsequent users should conform to the previous use, albeit being free to be ‘creative’, that is to say being able to exploit the context for new meanings. Now, it may appear strange that we should use ‘rule’ in the context of pragmatics, rather than the word ‘principle’ (cf. ‘cognitive principles’), but it should be clear that while I accept that speakers can be guided to some extent by cognitive principles (whether universal or not), they are also guided by use. Uses, intended as precedents, can reinforce the idea of principles. The cases of modulation from Recanati, which I discussed, remind us of a language game pointed out by Wittgenstein. Suppose that a child listens to a series of numbers, then he tries to reproduce the series by internalizing a rule.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11...100, 110, 120, 130...<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> I think a similar treatment can be found in Oscar Wilde’s use of ‘student’ in ‘The Happy Prince’.

<sup>6</sup> This has been adapted from *The Blue Book*, 5:

5. All the questions considered here link up with this problem: Suppose you had taught someone to write down series of numbers according to rules of the form: Always write down a number *n* greater than the preceding. (This rule is abbreviated to ‘Add *n*’.) The numerals in this game are to be groups of dashes |, ||, |||, etc. What I call teaching this game, of course, consisted in giving general explanations and doing examples—these examples are taken from the range, say, between 1 and 85. We now give the pupil the order ‘Add 1’. After some time we observe that after passing 100, he did what we should call adding 2; after passing 300, he does what we should call adding 3. We have him up for this: ‘Didn’t I tell you always to add 1? Look what you have done before you got to 100!’—Suppose the pupil said, pointing to the numbers 102, 104, etc., ‘Well, didn’t I do the same here? I thought this was what you wanted me to do.’—You see that it would get us no further

Now, what the child does is to reproduce the series in the right way up to a point, but then after the number 100, he introduces a variation. The example is interesting, because it relates the rule to contexts: the context 1–100 allows the child to reproduce the series like the one he has heard, but after 100 he is not sure what to do. It appears that the context influences his understanding of the rule, as he spontaneously tends to believe that after a big number the series must change and the gap between a number and its consequent must be wider, even though it is a function of the same rule, as he does not say 100, 112, 114, but he uses the same series as before, but adds a 0.

This case is more or less like the different applications of the rule for ‘open’. One introduces variation that can deal with contextual variation, while keeping the rule unchanged in the abstract.

## 5 Indirect Reporting, Implicit Rules, and Simulation Processes

When dealing with the law and pragmatics in matters of interpretation, an analogy comes to mind. Interpreting the law is like making an indirect report on what the original lawmakers said. Thus, the courts are more or less in the position of indirect reporters—with a difference: The courts are aware of the business of reporting, they are not just reporting, and have a specific know-how and training on reporting what the lawmakers said. And now an important insight comes to mind: interpreting (the law) and indirect reporting amount to the same thing. How can this be? The fact of the matter is that in interpreting the law, one is making a statement about what the lawmakers said (in a statute, constitution, contract, or other type of legal document). One is not interpreting for oneself, but for some other people—mainly the people who make an appeal to the court or are involved in a judiciary proceeding. The judgment on what the lawmakers originally intended is a decision about what they said and one that will affect some future decision or a course of conduct. Analogies with indirect reporting are clear. One makes a report—in indirect reporting—to transmit knowledge about what someone said, that has a bearing on a certain future conduct on the part of the person who is the beneficiary of the indirect report. In indirect reporting, we report what someone said (the proposition ‘p’) with the belief that knowing that ‘p’ (or whether ‘p’ is true) will be beneficial to the hearer.

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here again to say ‘But don’t you see...?’, pointing out to him again the rules and examples we had given to him. We might, in such a case, say that this person naturally understands (interprets) the rule (and examples) we have given as we should understand the rule (and examples) telling us: ‘Add 1 up to 100, then 2 up to 200, etc.’

It seems to me that Wittgenstein is pointing out that there is some under-determined meaning in the rule of use instantiated in the series taught by the teacher. So, presumably, in learning rules of use, there are many ways we could understand them, and part of mastering a rule is to understand how it can deal with new cases or new contexts. Of course the problem to solve is how people get the rules of use in correct ways.

The analogy is all the more striking and illuminating; if we think of the court as interpreting the law in such a way that, if possible, it will be protecting the defendant (say, in case the defendant's sentence can be more lenient in light of certain linguistic considerations about the import of the law). Now, Carston's words about protecting those defendants who are accused of crimes on the basis of a law that is not completely clear are of use in determining the analogy between interpreting the law and issuing an indirect report. When I say 'John said you are in danger', my words are uttered to protect the hearer from some impending danger. I believe that transmitting knowledge—however indirect the epistemological link might be—can be protective for the hearer. I believe that if she/he trusts both me and John's words, she/he will be protected from some impending danger. Of course, the judge is not only the person (or institution) who applies the law by issuing a sentence, but is also a person (or institution) who evaluates the words of the lawmakers in a statute trying to protect as best as possible the rights of the defendant. The defendant's rights, as Carston says, are to be defended not only against an unjust procedure but also against a law that is equivocal by having interpretative latitude.

Now, if no substantial objection can be raised to my seeing and arguing for a parallel between clarifying a statute (or interpreting an obscure statute) and engaging in an indirect report, it is clear that we can apply all the machinery I built up in my papers on indirect reports (mainly Capone 2010, 2012, 2013a) to the interpretation of the law. Analogously, we can apply everything we know about interpreting the law to the pragmatics of indirect reports.

I did my best to argue that indirect reports present a perspective on what the speaker (the original or reported speaker) said, in which the meaning (the speaker's meaning) of what she/he said is most important; and I proposed that the reporting speaker (the indirect reporter) should do her best to avoid changing the modes of presentation used by the original speaker, especially if use of different modes of presentation results in changing the content of what was said. Now, remember what Carston said about protecting the defendant from a statute which is obscure; in the same way, we must defend the original speaker of an indirect report from a report that obscures his intended meaning by adding 'interpolations'. 'Interpolation' is a term that goes back to philologists—for example, philologists established that Beowulf contains interpolations by the Christian monks who transcribed the epic poem. If transcribing a poem can be considered a way of reporting (an oral text), then we clearly see that *interpolations* can occur even in a small segment of indirect reporting. The original speaker's intentions should not be obscured by interpolations—that is to say by the addition of the reporter's voice. And now the reader may already object—how can a reporter abstain from criticism and be completely neutral? How can the reporter disappear completely, if her/his voice is there? Of course, nobody says that the reporter should disappear, but she/he should be as neutral as possible. Consider Scalia, who says that applying morality or rationality to the interpretation of the law amounts to bending towards moral preferences in terms of social policy. He is clearly complaining about lack of objectivity. While the complaint is well placed and applies both to the law and to indirect reporting in general, it is wrong to think that a reporting speaker (or a court) should not do their

best to report a proposition without bending it to their own preferences. It turns out that in reporting what one said, one should do one's best to avoid interpolations, keeping them to a minimum; it would be preferable, whenever it is *impossible not* to express one's voice (say, due to the reporting speaker's indignation), to signal that that portion of speech does not belong to the reported speaker but to the reporting speaker. Of course, it is not always possible to be explicit about the slots reserved to the original speaker and those reserved to the reporting speaker. However, given a rational use of clues, one can find ways to distance oneself from a certain voice, or add one's voice in a way that is distinctively recognizable to the report. Now remember we accepted with some prudence Carston's idea that interpretation should only proceed through reference to default readings of certain words (stereotypical meanings); this view should be seen as being potentially in conflict with the idea that moral considerations and in general considerations of rational social policy should apply to the interpretation of the law. Some moral considerations intervene in indirect reports, especially those reporting slurs. Here, the reporting speaker is confronted with a conflict between having to report verbatim what the speaker said and having to censure the impolite or racist speech. A compromise can be reached by using a description of the words used, by letting the hearer know that something that was improper occurred, while at the same time protecting the reporter's face (this suggestion is due to Keith Allan, p.c.). If the crude words of the original speaker are reported, the reporting speaker is guilty of complicity. Now notice that 'guilty' is a legal concept—not only is the original speaker guilty of the offence, but the reporting speaker is guilty too, due to his complicity—the tacit endorsement of the action by failing to refrain from reporting the utterance or by failing to use a neutral description. In reporting a slurring word, one is not only involved in reporting, in quoting, but if the quoting occurs without inverted commas, the reporting speaker is guilty as well. The slurring word, in other words, is being *quasi-used*, and not only mentioned, contrary to the logic of textbooks. This is clearly a pragmatic fact. Now, here the parallel with the law breaks down a bit, as when a case of libel needs to be discussed in the court: here, nobody would think that the lawyers or the judge or the witnesses in reporting the offensive episode are using the offensive words in question. The offensiveness of the words in question is bracketed by the formal proceedings.

Now, before closing this section, I want to consider if indirect reporting can involve something analogous to the consequences of the concept/application distinction. Consider again the case of 'cruel'. We have said that in reporting the intentions of the founding fathers of the American Constitution, we can plausibly come to accept that although flogging or ear-cropping did not fall within the scope of words such as 'cruel', now these actions come to be included among things that are cruel. Thus, it would be licit to say that the founding fathers, had they had ways to reflect enough on this case, would have come to the conclusion that ear-cropping and flogging is cruel (as applied to students, however rebel). Thus, if a *simulation* process is run, they could be reasonably said to have said that ear-cropping and flogging should not be done (as applied to students). And now comes the important idea of this chapter. Reconstructing the intentions of a reported speaker—in the or-

dinary case of the report of a speech event—is often a matter of reconstructing the speaker’s intentions through a simulation process.

Consider ‘Mother said you can go out’. This clearly amounts to saying ‘Mother said that you can go out, if such and such conditions obtain’. Now, given that the part about conditions has been left inexplicit, one would not be surprised if the same speech utterance can be reported as ‘Mum said you cannot go out’ (a Wittgensteinian conclusion). Of course, the conclusion is not that for every utterance we can report both ‘p’ and its opposite, but that when a certain degree of implicitness has been left, any report of an utterance involving a rule (‘you can go out’) is subject to the same under-determinacy of rules pointed out by Wittgenstein (see the example from *The Blue Book*). In these cases, a simulation process is necessary. Remember, we needed a simulation process to determine what the lawmakers might have said about a certain case. The simulation process involves matters of policy which could be determined by reasoning about objective aspects of the situation, the purpose of the law, and the contextual considerations related to the case.

And now, if all this is kept into account, it is clear that even in the case in which a mum uttered the literal words ‘She can go out’, a dad who needs to report the rule (or command or permission), faced with a different situation, would have to interpret the mother’s words by running a simulation of what she would have decided, had she known the objective elements of the new situation.

Now, despite the literal words ‘She can go out’, a father would be compelled to say ‘Mother did not say you can go out. Your grandmother died’. (circumstances have changed.) And this settles the question, because words expressing a certain decision cannot completely express the rule on which the decision is based. When this rule is spelled out and a new situation occurs that is likely to change the deliberative decision, the simulation run on the new context is likely to change the words of the decision.

We have thus departed to a great extent from literality. Parallels with what happens in the case of the law have justified our decision to depart from literality in the case of indirect reports. Intentions as captured by indirect reports need not be confined to the actual decision by the reported speaker but need to address the rule used in coming to such a decision. Since in a majority of cases the judicial or deliberative rule is left inexplicit, this is a major source of *pragmatic intrusion*.

Notice also the analogy with the previously discussed cases of ‘modulation’. The indirect reporting must adapt to the new context of the indirect report. The words reported thus acquire a new meaning (a new life) embedded in the utterance of the reporter and in the new context. *Adaptation* is important, as whatever was left implicit in the original words now can interact with the new context to project a new meaning. In particular, the grounds of the decision reported (‘She can go out’) and the conditions that must be applicable to the decision interact with aspects of the new context to change the decision itself. Thus, a completely new decision can be reported on the basis of an earlier decision, based on implicit grounds and on implicit conditions (‘She can go out if...’). Something similar to saturation happens, as in saturation, the subject of e.g. ‘This is nice’ can change countless times in new

contexts and, thus the utterance acquires new life in a new context (so Wittgenstein was right when he said that language games are forms of life). The case of implicit grounds for a decision P (say ‘She can go out (if...)’) can be such that the context manages to change the meaning of the predication as well—so this is a much more entrenched case of pragmatic intrusion with respect to a case of saturation.

## 6 Cancellability of Conversational Explicatures

Explicatures play a fundamental role in legal texts. When there are gaps to be filled, the pragmatic parts of explicatures are bound to fill them. Although I will not specifically discuss such devices, devices for reference of anaphoric type come to mind as the most important cases of explicatures in the law. Textual matters have to be resolved and pronominals are always in search for an antecedent (Huang 2000). The interpretation that makes most sense is the one which wins, in line with the Maxim of Relevance or Levinson’s I-Principle (Levinson 2000), which furnish the most informative interpretations, subject to constraints of rationality. Perhaps the most discussed case of explicature in the law is that of the use of the word ‘vehicle’, discussed by Carston (2013). Suppose the law prohibits the circulation of vehicles which have iron wheels, a chicken coop which has been fitted with iron wheels is likely to damage the streets, and judges have to decide whether a chicken coop on iron wheels represents a vehicle or not. There may be different views on this. A court may decide to show deference to the legislature which has a certain purpose in mind (that of protecting the roads of the country) or otherwise decide to protect the beneficiaries of the law from meanings which plausible though they are, are not clearly contained in the text. According to Carston (2013), a court should attend to the stereotypical meaning of a certain word, as that is likely to reflect common usage. According to such a stance, the court would have to decide that a chicken coop is not a vehicle. A different stance would be taken if we followed Hart (1958), who believes that matters of public policy and morality should be taken into account in a judicial decision. Leaving aside this controversial case, I will not express my own opinions beyond saying that a purely linguistic stance will not do, and that often moral issues (or issues of public policy) should prevail. However, I agree with Carston that the duty of the lawmaker is to enact statutes which ought to be expressed in a plain language and that the beneficiaries of the law should be protected from statutes that are too complicated to be understood. Now, we agree that clarity is an issue. But when a statute is not clear enough and cannot allow us to treat easily borderline cases, what should be done? Should a protective attitude win despite the fact that it should be obvious (or it should have been obvious for the defendant) that a certain action was not permissible? Clearly, in many cases, people do not act by holding the civil or criminal law manual in hand; they mainly rely either on discussions of criminal trials in the mass media or on common sense. Common sense should have led the person who used the chicken coop by connecting it to a tractor to refrain from doing something whose consequences could be predicted to be bad

and whose results would be bad for the public roads. I admit this is a controversial case, and I am not particularly interested in one or the other outcome of the controversy. I only want to use this case as instantiating the fact that the law has gaps and these need to be filled by pragmatic inference.

And now the question is what has all this to do with cancellability? The issue of cancellability of explicatures has intrigued me for a number of years, as I have been among a very restricted set of scholars to support the view that explicatures are not (or should not be) cancellable (Capone 2009). In Capone (2009), I have connected the issue of cancellability of explicatures with the issue of intentionality. The main upshot of that article is that if strong intentionality is conveyed by a case of explicature—as is likely to be in case an explicature rescues a discourse from contradiction, incompatibility or logical absurdity—then it is absurd to claim that the explicature rescuing the discourse can be cancelled. In a recent paper, Carston (2010) has pointed out that cancellability is not only explicit but also contextual. If an explicature that arises in a context does not arise in a different context, then the explicature is cancellable. Now, let us go back to the case of ‘open’ as in ‘open the door’, ‘open the window’, ‘open the book’, ‘open the wound’—as we have pointed out, in each of these cases we have a different modulation (hence a different explicature). When I say ‘I opened the book’ I mean that I selected a certain page and my gaze turned to that page. Is this explicature cancellable because in a different context, such as ‘open the door’ I (might) mean something else like ‘ensuring that the two parts of the door are drawn towards one of the walls’? One explicature does not exclude the other, because the movements could be quite similar. It is the outcome that changes. The door, if it is opened, results in a big aperture in the wall. Especially in the case of modulation it is clear that the pragmatic inference adapts to the context in which the word is used. But adaptation of an inference to a context need not be equivalent to cancellation of the inference. Indeed, in this case, the explicatures all have something in common (they have a semantic entailment in common).

Now take the case of an explicature in a legal text caused by the need to harmonize two different statutes. Given a potential conflict, a court needs to eliminate the contradiction by arriving at a special interpretation of one of the texts (the modification is effected in one of the statutes, not in both; the modification is the result of official interpretation on the part of the court, which takes the role of the legislature in this case). Now, does it make sense to say that in a different context the explicature would not have occurred? The problem is that an explicature—unlike generalized inference—occurs in a certain context and if the context shows some conflict between two statutes, one interpretation—the one that leads to contradiction—has to go. Surely, we could have decided to interpret the other statute in a different way, in which case the explicature would have evaporated. But why is it that the other text remained unmodified (interpretatively)? Presumably because it could not be modified or because it made most sense to modify this and not the other statute. The notion of cancellability does not help us here. Surely in a different context (one where there is no conflict between two statutes), we would not have the explicature in question. But perhaps in a different context, where there is no incompatibility between two statutes, we would not have had an explicature at all but only a literal



meaning. It is hard to think that a literal meaning can be seen as cancelling an explicature, because the potential of having the explicature is still there.

The cases of vagueness pointed out by Endicott (1994 and later) could help the relevance-theoretic scholar who clings to the cancellability of explicatures. In the case of vagueness, the court could fill a gap through interpretation. The legislature has delegated power to the court that has decided on the basis of the contingencies of the case. Since the legislature cannot predict all configurations of circumstances, it can decide to delegate power to local courts, who know well how to adapt the law to the circumstances. The court usually decides on the basis of public policy. Now, Carston could claim that in different contexts or circumstances a court could take a different decision and thus the explicature could be different—hence it is cancellable in the sense of being sensitive to and a function of context. Now, I agree that the decision could be different depending on the court and on the circumstances. But it is not random. It is at least a function of the public policy and of the purposes the legislature was explicitly pursuing. Furthermore, in this case there is little coincidence between the intention of the legislature and the intention of the court. Given that no strong intentionality can be proven to exist, I am not particularly bothered by this case, because it does not represent the processes of pragmatic inference as we have them in ordinary conversation (and the case of the law is only in a minimal sense the case of a conversation between the legislature, the courts, and defendants).

## 7 Conclusion

The parallels (and analogies) between the distinction between concepts and applications in the law and in ordinary language led us to think that the fact that there is a certain degree of under-determination in rules (in concepts) means that language users have to extrapolate rules from language use in such a way that makes them able to account for new uses (of the same concepts) by adapting them to new contexts (and new exigencies). The fact that a concept needs to be applied in new contexts compels us to extrapolate a rule that is always incomplete, presenting lacunae to be filled, allowing for adaptation. We may think of such rules having the structure:

$$S + x \text{ or } S - x,$$

where  $S$  is some stable nucleus, whereas  $+x$  or  $-x$  is variable and needs to be extrapolated from new contexts. Suppose that so far we have encountered a concept  $N$  in several concepts and we have extrapolated some common structure, amounting more or less to  $S$ . We have observed so far a certain constancy of meaning ( $S$ ), accompanied by a certain fluctuation or variability, and the variable part ( $+x$ ) or ( $-x$ ) has been the function of a certain rule having itself a stable core and a variable part (say:  $R+x$  or  $R-x$ ). Then, we should be able to say that a language user must calculate  $R$  for the past uses to which he has been exposed and expect that the variable part of the rule should remain constant at least in part in subsequent contexts.

Furthermore, ( $R+x$  or  $R-x$ ) should be a function of the new contexts encountered, but the new contexts should also be a function of  $R+x$ . In other words, we can assume that for some contexts  $R+x$  is not an appropriate adaptation of rule  $R$  to such contexts (e.g. Cn). For example, an utterance such as ‘John wanted to open the wave’ does not make sense, despite the fact that there is an interpretation according to which John wants to do something impossible. This context is not appropriate because the variable part of  $R+x$  and the invariable part of  $R+x$  cannot adapt to the new context in such a way to yield a result in line with the semantics of ‘open’, which is confined to solid objects. It does not appear to me that an extension of the concept of ‘open’ that includes the revision of the quality of the objects is an extension that is useful. In other words, a limit of extending concepts is that the change should not result in concepts that are radically different and for which there is no purposeful usage.

I end the chapter on an important note (an epiphany). While contextual saturation or modulation is subject to Principles of Rationality, it is also subject to rules of use. These rules of use presumably tell us what kind of modulations is permissible (or not). We may capture these rules by the abstract structure:

$$R + x \text{ or } R - x$$

But such structures have a variable part. And now we are back to Wittgenstein’s problem of how to understand a rule and we remember that understanding a rule may be a matter of inference. Understanding rules of use, in other words, may involve pragmatic intrusion and pragmatic principles. So far, we have only touched the tip of the iceberg. I admit great ignorance with respect to the issue we have bumped into in the course of our intellectual peregrinations. However, a few things could now be said with certainty. When Wittgenstein says that meaning is use, he is, among other things, thinking of the concept of a rule and of rule learning. If rule learning is a contextual business, in that a rule has a variable part, this amounts to saying that a rule has a rationale for its changing as a function of exposure to different contexts. Suppose we want to learn the meaning of the word ‘toy’, we first encounter it in contexts c1, c2, c3, c4, and come to extrapolate a rule of use  $R$ , then we encounter it in slightly different contexts c5, c6, c7, c8, and we come to extrapolate a slightly different rule  $R1$ , then we encounter it in contexts c9, c10, c11 and we end up by learning rule  $R3$ . Since we have a variable part of the rule, there is never any guarantee that we have completely mastered a rule (or a definitive rule), but we always master a rule relative to a range of contexts and we know we have to modify the rule if we encounter another range of contexts. And the rationale for this is that there is no way of predicting the new situations in which the rule is to be used and the ways the rule must adapt to the new situations. The people who used the rule in previous contexts were knowledgeable of the rule ‘so far’ but had no idea of how to use the rule in a different context. Thus, the fact that the rule has a variable part is an advantage, because the rule can somehow change to adapt to the new context. A person who encounters the context ‘I opened the file’, knows that the rule must be used in ways that account for the way the word ‘open’ was used in ‘open a window’,

‘open a door’, ‘open a book’, but also in a new way, so as to account for the particularity of the new context (work on an electronic device). When one encounters the words ‘open a file’, one knows what this has in common with ‘open a door’, which is that the object opened is not closed, and thus something can be used (the window can be used for looking at things outside; the door can be used for stepping in; the open book can be used for reading). This is probably the only property which ‘open a door’, ‘open a window’, ‘open a file’ have in common. However, when a range of contexts shows similarities to ‘open a file’, a new rule for use in this range of contexts is learned. The similarities between the two ranges of context are important. When you open something, you cause an aperture and you get into an object (a house, a book, a file) whether physically or metaphorically. As we can see, the rule changes as soon as we encounter different ranges of context. Yet, the rule is made abstract enough: You get physically into an object or you enter metaphorically into an object (you have access to it). The fact that the rule becomes more abstract allows us to dispense with the notion (or problem) of polysemy: We still have the same word. We know its common denominator in all contexts, but we also know that in range of contexts Range 1, the variable part of the rule is filled in by elements we associated with Range 1, and we know that in range of contexts Range 2, the variable part is filled with reference to some common feature of Range 2. Now, what is going on has become clear. The rule shows variability, even though it has some common denominator. The variability involves remembering what each range of contexts has in common. The concept of adaptation is also important. When we are in a new situation and we do not have a verb suitable for that, we need to use a word which can be adapted to the new context. In adapting the rule for that word to the new context, a speaker knows that there is something which the new context shares with previous contexts and that it also differs from the previous contexts. He also knows that it is appropriate to use the word in a new context despite the difference from previous contexts. In other words, he recognizes, as part of the rule extrapolated from previous contexts, that the word (and its rule) can be used in the new contexts. Thus, the rule for a word is new-context predictive. The speaker knows when he cannot use a certain word for a certain new situation; he also knows that he can use a word in a new situation creatively, that is to say by creating effects that are needed in the new context. The variable part of a rule, in other words, acts as a predictor of new contexts and of the extent to which they can differ from the previous contexts. In using ‘open’ we know that we can use it for ‘open a book’ but also for ‘open a file, but not for ‘open a lake’ (in case we want to empty it). The rule with its variable part is also generative of contexts, provided that they are described at an abstract level. The prospective part of a rule, however, needs to be different from its retrospective part, for, for every new context encountered, we need to characterize the new range of contexts through the variable part of the rule.

Before concluding this conclusion, it may be worth our while to have another look at a statute which prohibits drivers from using vehicles without tyres. The law-makers when they made this statute could not think of (or imagine) eccentricities of the type of the chicken coop on iron wheels. The judge, who wants to sanction this behaviour, needs reference to the law and chooses the law that best fits the case.

He chooses the statute which prohibits using vehicles without tyres on the public roads. And now, the question arises whether a chicken coop on iron wheels (on a road) is a vehicle (or not). The question, of course, is whether ‘vehicle’ allows some broadening. It appears that here we are at an intersection: ordinary language users would side with Carston, who looks at the prototypical inferences associated with ‘vehicle’, but people with legal experience may make a different choice and will look at the purpose of the law and will broaden ‘vehicle’ in the appropriate manner. People with legal experiences will see the purpose of the law and will construct an appropriate rule for ‘vehicle’ by filling the variable part of the rule by reference to the purpose of the law (which looks at possible damage to public roads and a way of preventing that). Ordinary language users may make a different choice, as they use different contexts to fill in the variable part of the rule. However, is not there a way for the two routes to merge? A person who has been proceeding along the route of ordinary usage (of the word ‘vehicle’) may, while driving his/her car to the office, find big holes in the public road, caused by a vehicle like (not necessarily identical with) the chicken coop. Now, she/he realizes the point of the law. This is a case exemplifying Jaszczolt’s (1999) distinction between the individual and the social path of interpretation. When we follow an individual path of interpretation, the ordinary usage of ‘vehicle’ will do (as Carston says), but when we use the social path of interpretation the ordinary usage of ‘vehicle’ will not do, because the law, understood by using contexts not intended for the language game of the law will lead to trouble—and sooner or later the ordinary citizen will spot the trouble. But I argued from the very beginning that the statute concerning the safety of public roads is understood by the ordinary citizen by using the right kinds of contexts appropriate to this language game, simulating the minds of the lawmakers, which, in turn, simulated the minds of ordinary citizens at the sight of the troubles caused by eccentric vehicles like a chicken coop on iron wheels. The intersection of this double simulation (citizens simulating lawmakers and lawmakers simulating ordinary citizens) will provide the social path of interpretation, which is in general ensured by following the rules of the appropriate language game and also by interpreting the rules in the appropriate way by reference to the purpose of the rules.

Now, we may partially address a paradox created by the theory of use as developed by Wittgenstein:

How can it be the case that an utterly new application of a rule regarding a certain expression, that is an application of the expression in an utterly new circumstance, is correct or incorrect given that no-one has hitherto thus applied the expression? (Voltoolini 2010)

The case of the law might help us. We may look at the intentions and the purposes of those who used an expression before—I am not saying that this is a simple thing to do, but it can be done, if one is armed with good will. Of course, a single use may not help, and we may have to look at more uses. In the most difficult cases, we must form a theory about the use of a word and the purposes of using that word. Consider, for example, the word ‘cruel’. We have already seen that we may simulate whether or not the founding fathers of the American Constitution would consider corporal punishments cruel (now). That may require investigating the notion of corporal punishments and using our most updated knowledge about them. We may

well find out that the founding fathers would now consider corporal punishments cruel—they would thus apply the word ‘cruel’ in a different way from users at the time the Constitution was written. Now, consider another interesting Wittgensteinian example, taken from a discussion in Voltolini (2010). Suppose I come across something that looks like a chair but appears and then disappears, would I apply the term ‘chair’ to it? If we have developed the notion that a chair is a persistent object (in that it is an object), then we find it extremely difficult to apply this word to such a new entity. We simply do not adapt to the new situation, because applying the word ‘chair’ to this new entity would involve sometimes applying it to objects and sometimes applying it to non-objects. There could be no coherent definition of the uses of the word ‘chair’ in this way. This could be seen as a limit to contextual variability in definitions of rules. Since the invariable part of the rule would have to be variable, the notion of a rule, as we have formulated it would have to go. It is not by chance that languages do not involve mechanisms of reference based on the rule ‘Apply the word X to anything you encounter’, although there is a general tendency towards multifunctional words (English ‘get’ is one of them). But this is a different story, where the (radical) contextualist point of view has some limited application (we could invent a Wittgensteinian language game with the rule ‘use the same word for all the objects encountered’ and we may very well play it and be successful in individuating objects—but this would soon turn into some kind of (ad hoc) demonstrative).

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**Part II**  
**Linguistics and Pragmatics**



# A Benchmark for Politeness

Keith Allan

**Abstract** (Im)politeness is never a depersonalized, decontextualized absolute but always a perception or judgement of appropriate behaviour on a given occasion—what one expects oneself and others to do in a particular social interaction. Nevertheless, it is normal for most tabooed words and phrases to be castigated in dictionaries as dysphemistic (having connotations that are offensive either about the denotatum and/or to people addressed or overhearing the utterance). For example, in a range of dictionaries, *shit* is judged ‘coarse’, ‘obscene’, ‘insulting’, ‘vulgar’, ‘profane’, ‘taboo’, ‘impolite’, and ‘offensive’. No rationale is given for any of these ex cathedra value judgements in the dictionaries, nor in media outlets, but a middle-class politeness criterion (MCPC) was proposed in Allan and Burridge, *Euphemism and Dysphemism: Language Used as Shield and Weapon*. (New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 21, 31, 1991):

In order to be polite to a casual acquaintance of the opposite sex in a formal situation in a middle-class environment, one would normally be expected to use the euphemism or orthophemism rather than the dispreferred counterpart. The dispreferred counterpart would be a dysphemism.

Orthophemisms (straight talking) and euphemisms (sweet talking) are words or phrases used as an alternative to a dispreferred (undesirable, inappropriate) expression because they avoid possible loss of face by the speaker and also the hearer or some third party. An orthophemism is typically more formal and more direct (or literal) than the corresponding more colloquial and figurative euphemism. There is no suggestion that the MCPC fails to apply between, say, close acquaintances of the same sex or any other dyad; however, language exchange between casual acquaintances of different sexes offers the most probable default conditions for the MCPC and, in this chapter, I claim that, with some slight adjustment, the MCPC offers a benchmark for politeness within Anglo communities. Following a discussion of (im)politeness theories and hypotheses about face management, (cultural) scripts, and habitus, the MCPC is closely examined, explained, and tested in the course of

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examining some texts. This chapter concludes with proposals to resolve the apparent limitations of the MCPC.

**Keywords** Appropriate behaviour · Cooperativeness · Face · Habitus · Impoliteness · Politeness · Rapport management · Social identity · Social interaction

## 1 Overview<sup>1</sup>

During the past 20 years or more there has been an enormous amount written about politeness and somewhat less about impoliteness (e.g. Lakoff 1973, Ide 1982; Brown and Levinson 1987; Matsumoto 1988, 1989; Ide 1989; Fraser 1990; Gu 1990; Allan and Burrige 1991, 2006; Sifianou 1992; Watts et al. 1992; Mao 1994; Lee-Wong 2000; Eelen 2001; Terkourafi 2001; Mills 2003; Watts 2003; Spencer-Oatey 2005; Haugh 2007; Bousfield 2008, Bousfield and Locher 2008; Haugh 2010; Culpeper 2011; Terkourafi 2011, 2012, *inter multos alios*). Various attempts have been made to define politeness and impoliteness and to classify and rank what are perceived to be their constituents. In the next section, I review some of these contributions and state my own preferences. What surprises me when reading this literature is that the grounds for counting a language expression polite or impolite are left implicit, a criticism that I justify in my review of the literature. All judgements that a given expression is polite or impolite are made based on the researcher's opinion or that reported by an informant, without the grounds for these judgements being explicitly identified.<sup>2</sup> By and large they do seem intuitively sound, though quibbles can arise. My own practice when discussing (im)politeness in Allan (1986 Vol. 1, pp. 10–36) was open to this same objection, but in work with Kate Burrige (Allan and Burrige 1991, 2006), we suggested a basis for the fact that although particular language expressions are not necessarily euphemistic in all contexts, it ignores reality to pretend that ordinary people do not speak and act as if some expressions are intrinsically euphemistic and others dysphemistic—for instance, *loo* is euphemistic whereas *shithouse* is not. What this means is that, in order to be polite to a casual acquaintance of the opposite sex in a formal situation in, say, a middle-class environment, one would normally be expected to use the euphemism rather than its dispreferred counterpart(s). A dispreferred counterpart would be dysphemistic (i.e. would, for one reason or another, cause offense). This middle-class politeness criterion (MCPC) is the focus of this chapter and is claimed to be the benchmark

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Kate Burrige, Jonathan Culpeper, Michael Haugh, Marina Terkourafi, and others for advice on earlier versions of this essay. Because I did not always take their advice, the usual disclaimer applies: No one but me is responsible for its flaws.

<sup>2</sup> This complaint applies to corpus-based studies and experimental work using questionnaires such as that reported in, for example, Culpeper 2011; Culpeper et al. 2010; Haugh 2007; Sifianou 1992; Spencer-Oatey 2005; Spencer-Oatey and Xing 2003; Watts 2003. We need to establish and explain the basis for people's opinions and not simply invoke social norms and conventions without accounting for them.

for intuitions that lead to the unexplicated judgements of (im)politeness criticised above. I shall proceed to explain its character, strengths, and limitations. I shall also show why it is that a criterion devised to account for evaluations of X-phemism (the union of euphemism, dysphemism, and orthophemism) should function as a benchmark for (im)politeness. In Sect. 2, I review theories of (im)politeness; in Sect. 3, there is detailed discussion of the (slightly revised) MCPC and a deconstruction of its composition; Sect. 4 inspects some texts to assess application of the MCPC; Sect. 5 briefly summarises.

## 2 Theories of (Im)politeness

Whether or not writers on (im)politeness accept the cooperative principle of Grice 1975, they all seem to accept that, if communication is to proceed smoothly, interlocutors must cooperate with one another to some extent (Fraser 1990 refers to a ‘conversational contract’, Arndt and Janney 1985 to ‘supportiveness’); this recognises one important element of common ground between speaker and hearer (see Clark 1996; Lee 2001; Stalnaker 2002; Allan 2013b, c). If X does not wish to communicate with Y, X must nonetheless know how *not* to cooperate. Some examples are: when being admonished by a parent, the child who blocks their ears and yells *Blah! Blah! Blah!*; a person slams down the telephone on being called by someone they have no wish to speak with; the person who takes an injunction out against a troublesome neighbour. All these require the knowledge of how to cooperate with an interlocutor in order not to do so. Most researchers into politeness accept that a large part of cooperative behaviour can be explained in terms of mutual presentation of face and reactions to it (Goffman 1955; Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987, *inter alios*). So, I shall briefly discuss face and the reasons for it being so important to (im)politeness.

Erving Goffman wrote:

The term *face* may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes—albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself. (Goffman 1955, p. 213)

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61) paraphrase Goffman’s definition as ‘the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself’ and they go on to decompose face into two coexisting aspects: ‘positive face’, the want of a person that their attributes, achievements, ideas, possessions, goals, etc. should be desirable to at least some approved others; and ‘negative face’, the want of a person not to be imposed upon by others.<sup>3</sup> Brown and Levinson’s claim to the universality of their

<sup>3</sup> This may be a reworking of Goffman’s ‘the person will have two points of view—a defensive orientation toward saving his own face and protective orientation toward saving the other’s face’ (Goffman 1955, p. 18).

politeness theory has been castigated for being Anglocentric because it categorizes face in terms of personal wants and also for its concept of negative face. I believe that the objection to negative face can be deflected, but that is not germane to my discussion of politeness. According to Brown and Levinson and their followers/interpreters, the face effect of an act is calculated against the sum of three pragmatic factors: (a) the social distance between the actor and the undergoer, determined on such parameters as their comparative ages, sexes, sociocultural backgrounds, and any pre-existing acquaintance; (b) an asymmetric power relation between actor and undergoer; and (c) the intrinsic weightiness (impositiveness) of the particular act (e.g. to ask someone the time is typically less onerous than asking to borrow their car, but in an emergency the latter may be excusable). Each of these parameters<sup>4</sup> is subject to different evaluations by different participants and observers on different occasions and under different contextual conditions; nonetheless, each is relevant to the proper behaviour of participants in a social interaction and may be referred to if a particular act is judged polite or impolite, and so must be taken into account by language users. Almost any act towards an undergoer has the potential to be threatening and thereby face threatening, even just uttering a greeting or failing to do so; thus, face work is required to manage social interaction. Brown and Levinson are criticised for identifying a hierarchy of linguistic strategies for dealing with face-threatening acts (FTAs) that they claimed to be universal. What does seem universal is that there is in the language of each social group, a hierarchy of such strategies, but they may be different in form from those proposed by Brown and Levinson. As an example of the kind of thing I am talking about, see (1):

(1) [Situation: speaker S is seeking change for a slot machine from addressee H.]

- a. *Got any change?* [Bald on record to a close friend, relation, or someone that S feels s/ he can boss around.]
- b. *Hey Harry, have you got any change?* [Politely to a friend, relation, or colleague. Attention paid to H's feelings by putatively giving H the option to refuse.]
- c. *I'm sorry to trouble you, but do you by any chance have change of this five-dollar note?* [H is a ladylike stranger on whom male S is imposing.]
- d. *It's so embarrassing, but I don't have enough change.* [S squirms before H whom s/he is trying to favourably impress.]

One could add at least a dozen more variations on the theme. At first sight it may look as though the use of different language expressions indicates a semantic basis for (im)politeness; however, although lexical meaning and the particular syntactic configurations of items—which are often formulaic (Wray and Perkins 2000; Terkourafi 2001)—have their part to play in (im)politeness, it is the strategic way that those language expressions are used, i.e. the pragmatics, which is crucial. A question to pose is: What is the basis for the Brown and Levinson politeness strategies? And the answer must be their intuitions as speakers of English, or their and others' intuitions about Tzeltal and Tamil. In this chapter, I make no specific claims about languages other than present-day English because I do not have the data to do so,

<sup>4</sup> Slugoski and Turnbull (1988) suggest an additional parameter, affect, measuring the degree of existing antagonism between the interlocutors. Whether this should be an additional parameter or included under (a), I leave to the reader. All these parameters are, in reality, extremely complex.

but in Sect. 5, I do comment on what is likely to be the case for other languages and other times.

From the foregoing sketch I draw the following conclusions. Speaking to others is a social activity, and like other social activities (such as dancing, playing in an orchestra, playing cards, or football) the people involved, S and H, mutually recognise—as part of their common ground—that certain conventions govern their actions and their use of language, both when speaking and when interpreting the actions and utterances of their interlocutor. Each interlocutor is held responsible for observing or violating the conventions of language interchange. A subset of those conventions involves face work.<sup>5</sup> Almost any act by S towards H has the potential to be face threatening; what renders most acts benign are the circumstances under which they take place and the perceived relations between the participants. As Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61) write, ‘normally everyone’s face depends on everyone else’s being maintained’ (echoing Goffman 1955, p. 216). As Leech (1983, p. 109) puts it in his tact maxim: For any act, S should minimize the cost to H and maximize the benefit to H. Face is one’s ‘public self-image’ in the sense that it is, for a given social encounter, a person’s belief about the way others perceive them acting within that encounter (hence, Goffman’s ‘social value’), and it is not necessarily the individual alone but also people he or she may be taken to represent (family, gender, school, team, profession, ideology, etc.; Goffman 1955, p. 213). Hence, one must not *let the side/family/country/party/...down*.

The Brown and Levinson concept of face has been condemned for being in part inapplicable to Japanese (Matsumoto 1988, 1989; Ide 1989) and also to Chinese (Gu 1990; Mao 1994; Lee-Wong 2000) largely because of the need to heed social hierarchy and moral/ethical values in those societies. The difference is, I believe, a matter of emphasis rather than being a qualitative distinction because, to at least some extent in Western (including Anglo) society, public self-image is constituted from a person’s place in the social structure (one’s social identity), which includes recognition of the face concerns of the undergoer and bystanders.<sup>6</sup> Significantly, Mao (1994, p. 473) distinguishes the Chinese/Japanese concept of face as ‘*public image*’ versus ‘*public self-image*’; however, a person’s own assessment of their *public image*, meaning ‘the image they present to others, what others esteem them for’, is what is meant by *public self-image*—which is not simplistically selfish or individualistic.<sup>7</sup> Thus, in order to make sense of what Mao, Matsumoto, and others may be referring to, it helps to consider aspects of a person’s notion of self or identity:

Psychological theories of identity typically distinguish between personal (individual) and social (group or collective) identities. Individual identity refers to self-definition as a unique individual, whereas collective identity refers to self-definition as a group member. (Spencer-Oatey 2007, p. 641)

<sup>5</sup> Its complement includes knowledge of grammar.

<sup>6</sup> Sifianou (2011, p. 44) correctly notes that Brown and Levinson are wrongly accused of ignoring this.

<sup>7</sup> Yu (2001) convincingly demonstrates that Chinese and Anglo concepts of face are far more similar than they are different and though Fukushima (2013) began with the hypothesis that Japanese rate attentiveness to others more highly than Americans, she found that there was in fact very little difference.

Now, it seems to me that what Spencer-Oatey refers to as ‘individual identity’ is principally involved in the Brown and Levinson concept of face, whereas the ‘collective identity’ is principally involved in the Japanese and Chinese concept of face as described by the authors cited. Certainly, the notions of politeness favoured by, e.g. Fraser (1990), Escandell-Vidal (1996), Terkourafi (1999), Spencer-Oatey (2000), Eelen (2001), Terkourafi (2001), Escandell-Vidal (2009) allow for a more socially oriented account of politeness than is attributed to Brown and Levinson.

Spencer-Oatey (2000), Spencer-Oatey and Xing (2003), Spencer-Oatey (2005), Spencer-Oatey (2007) described (im)politeness as ‘rapport management’, resulting from the interplay of face, social identity, and ‘sociality rights’. Rapport management involves (a) choice of discourse content and the form of its presentation (lexical, grammatical, and prosodic choices); (b) ‘score-keeping’ in terms of Lewis (1979)—procedural matters such as turn taking and attention to other participants and what they say; (c) gesture, eye contact, and other kinesic attributes of face-to-face interaction (Spencer-Oatey 2000, p. 19 f.). Although all of these things are referred to in Brown and Levinson (1978), Brown and Levinson (1987), the Spencer-Oatey hypothesis has proved more acceptable in cross-cultural adaptation (e.g. Spencer-Oatey and Xing 2003, Culpeper et al. 2010). Certainly, the focus on social identity with sociality rights and obligations is an appropriate move away from the focus on individual face wants, which is the hallmark of Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory. Social identity includes what one thinks of oneself as a person and as a group member (of family, firm, gender, etc.)—which overlaps with sociality rights and obligations. These are what one expects oneself and others to do in social interactions,<sup>8</sup> and they typically form a part of common ground: When these expectations are not met, the consequence is a sense of injustice. Any behaviour on the part of another which evokes this sense of injustice has the potential to be judged dysphemistic and impolite. Here is a line leading back to the view of politeness in Lakoff (1973) who suggested some ‘rules’ for behaving politely: be deferential, do not impose; give options; be friendly. Leech (1983) also sees politeness in terms of displaying amicability. Politeness, then, is a display of consideration for others (Arndt and Janney 1985; Fraser 1990; Sifianou 1992; Haugh 2004); but there are different conceptions of what is meant by *consideration for others* among different groups (‘communities of practice’ in terms of e.g. Schnurr et al. 2008). This arises because politeness is never a depersonalized, decontextualized absolute but always a perception or judgement of appropriate behaviour on a given occasion; in words used earlier ‘what one expects oneself and others to do’ in a particular social interaction. This ties politeness to frames and scripts and to the notion of habitus (Bourdieu 1991; Eelen 2001; Terkourafi 2001; Mills 2003; Watts 2003).

Very little we encounter is entirely new, and our brains look for, detect, and store structured patterns of information that constitute part of ‘common knowledge’ in the sense of Lewis (1969) and ‘mutual knowledge’ in the sense of Schiffer (1972). I use *frame* for the set of characteristic features, attributes, and functions of a denotatum,

<sup>8</sup> Spencer-Oatey refers to them as ‘equity rights’ and ‘association rights’ (Spencer-Oatey 2000, p. 14).

plus its characteristic interactions with things necessarily or typically associated with it (cf. Minsky 1977; Fillmore 1982); and I use *script* for structured information about stereotyped dynamic event sequences whose components are, typically, predictable (cf. Schank and Abelson 1977; Schank 1984).<sup>9</sup> Some of these frames and scripts are appealed to in what one expects oneself and others to do in a particular social interaction, and they provide the basis for appropriate behaviour (see Fraser 1990; Escandell-Vidal 1996; Terkourafi 1999; Allan 2001; Eelen 2001; Terkourafi 2001; Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004; Goddard 2006; Escandell-Vidal 2009). Escandell-Vidal (1996, 2009) suggests that these frames and scripts are learned as part of one's socialization as a human being and that they, like language competence, degenerate after puberty so that postpubescent exposure to a new culture renders a non-native-like ability in practice—which explains why out-groupers often seem impolite. The socialization gives rise to expected behaviours (consistent with Fraser 1990), which are therefore unmarked behaviours.

However, what one participant judges apposite may not be deemed appropriate by another participant or observer. This discrepancy of perception arises through the personal habitus of the individual (see Watts 2003, p. 163 for an example). Habitus is the (collective) disposition that generates practices, perceptions, and attitudes within a social group, acquired (like frames, scripts, and other aspects of socialization) through the activities and experiences of everyday life. Habitus interacts with particular contexts and events to shape the way an individual internalises social structures and appropriate ways (as well as inappropriate ways) to react to them. Although habitus is, like Saussure's 'langue',<sup>10</sup> fundamentally a collective disposition shared with other members of a community, each individual within the community contributes to the habitus and utilizes his or her version of it. Like language, habitus is constantly evolving. (Im)politeness is a function of habitus and it, too, is constantly mutating.

The MCPC is a cognitive frame or cultural script<sup>11</sup> proposed to account for X-phemistic language which is the product of what, for now, we can refer to as (im)polite behaviour (this will be refined later to include Watts' 'politic behaviour' p. 12). Thus, what the MCPC is intended to capture is that to be polite is to act considerately towards others, in particular the undergoer and the people and things (including beliefs) that the undergoer holds dear. To be impolite is to disparage explicitly (or implicitly discount from consideration, e.g. by ignoring) any of these; thus, '[i]mpoliteness is behaviour that is face aggravating in a particular context' (Locher and Bousfield 2008, p. 3). Some standard examples of impolite behaviour include: the use of obfuscating language (often castigated as *jargon*); the use of an inappropriate style (slang, language that is too familiar and colloquial or, on other

<sup>9</sup> See Allan (2001) for more detail. These are also called 'schemata' (Bartlett 1932; Mazzone 2011), 'scenarios' (Sanford and Garrod 1981), and 'assumed familiarity' (Prince 1981). 'Cognitive frames' as described in Terkourafi (1999) are more like what I refer to as scripts.

<sup>10</sup> Saussure (1931, p. 25).

<sup>11</sup> See Eelen (2001), Goddard and Wierzbicka (2004), Goddard (2006). I do not believe such a script has to be couched in Natural Semantic Metalanguage, nor is it restricted to lexical meaning.

occasions, too formal); profane swearing (using profane and/or obscene language); language that insults through lies, insinuation, innuendo, casting aspersions, digs, snide comments, insolence, ridiculing, name-calling; shouting down or threatening.<sup>12</sup> All such dysphemisms are wont to cause harassment, alarm or distress and be judged *rude* or *hurtful*. People who are impolite are judged rude, coarse, and ill-bred, unmannerly or just plain nasty; occasionally, when being impolite, they manifest that they are ill-socialized.

There is a connection between being polite and being polished, well mannered, and of good breeding. I referred above to the need in Chinese and Japanese conceptions of politeness to heed social hierarchy and moral/ethical values. There were echoes of this in the West stemming from antiquity, passed down in the educational system from the likes of Cicero's *De officiis* which championed *quod dici latine decorum potest; graece enim πρόπον dicitur...et quod decet honestum est et quod honestum est decet* (what in Latin may be called decorum; in Greek it is called propriety...what is proper is morally right, and what is morally right is proper; Cicero 1928 I.27.94). By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the morality was implicit in the inculcation of good manners. 'True Politeness' equates to 'Good Behaviour and Social Etiquette' and 'It embraces the Customs and Usages of Good Society' (Anonymous 1875, title page). Politeness is sensitive to social standing. In Fielding's novel, *The History of Tom Jones*, the two lady's maids of Sophia and her supposedly more sophisticated aunt have a tiff, which leads the latter maid to assert her superiority by being impolite:

Creature! You are below my anger, saucy trollop; but, hussy, I must tell you your breeding shows the meanness of your birth as well as of your education, and both very properly qualify you to be the mean serving-woman of a country-girl. (Fielding 1749 VII. 8)

In her turn, Sophia's maid puts on airs, asserting her own superiority over the landlady of an inn who has boasted 'Several people of the first quality are now in bed. Here's a great young squire, and many other great gentlefolks of quality':

Sure you people who keep inns imagine your betters are like yourselves. [...] Don't tell me [...] of quality! I believe I know more of people of quality than such as you. [...] Good woman, I must insist your first washing your hands [before you slice me some bacon]; for I am extremely nice and have been always used from my cradle to have everything in the most elegant manner.' The landlady [...] governed herself with much difficulty. [...] 'I beg the kitchen may be kept clear, that I may not be surrounded with all the blackguards in town; as for you, sir,' says she to Partridge, 'you look somewhat like a gentleman, and may sit still if you please; I don't desire to disturb anybody but mob. (Fielding 1749 X.4)

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<sup>12</sup> An insult assails the target with contemptuous, perhaps insolent, language intended to wound or disparage. People may be likened to and ascribed behaviour pertaining to animals, body parts and effluvia connected with sex, micturition, and defecation, sexual perversions, physical and mental abnormalities, character deficiencies, or attacked with '-ist' dysphemisms. All these are found in both true insults and also ritual insults (banter) among an in-group. See Allan and Burrige (2006), also Culpeper (2011).



The linking of politeness to social class is also demonstrated in:

Purity and Politeness of Expression [...] is the only external Distinction which remains between a Gentleman and a Valet; a Lady and a Mantua-maker. (Withers 1789, p. 161)

But, despite the wording of the MCPC, politeness behaviour is not simplistically determined by social class. It is manifest differently in different environments (different communities of practice).

Politeness is the ritual of society, as prayers are of the church; a school of manners, and a gentle blessing to the age in which it grew. (Emerson 1856, p. 325)

Every polite tongue has its own rules. (Murray 1824, p. 174)

Politeness, as I hope to have made clear, is wedded to what is spoken of, the participants and bystanders, the place, and the time period.<sup>13</sup> (Im)politeness is not absolute but relative to the occasion (Allan and Burrige 2006; Haugh 2007; Bousfield 2008; Mills 2011), which brings me to the motivation for this essay: Certain forms of behaviour and certain language expressions are, nonetheless, regarded as intrinsically (im)polite. I do not discuss forms of behaviour here but stick closely to language expressions. I begin with the fact that it is normal for most tabooed words and phrases to be branded in dictionaries as dysphemistic (having connotations that are offensive either about the denotatum and/or to people addressed or overhearing the utterance). For example, *shit* is judged ‘coarse’ by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED 1989) and WordNet 3 (Farlex Inc. 2011) which adds the epithets ‘obscene’ and ‘insulting’; it is judged ‘vulgar’ by the *American Heritage Dictionary* (2000), *Merriam-Webster* (online), and Wikipedia which adds ‘profane’; the *Collins English Dictionary* (2003) correctly identifies the word as ‘taboo’; the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* 2010 identifies it as ‘taboo, slang’; and *Kernerman English Multilingual Dictionary* (2010) as ‘an impolite or offensive word’. These are connotations and therefore pragmatic (see Allan 2007 for elaborated discussion).<sup>14</sup> What is the basis for these judgements? I suggest that the benchmark is the MCPC.

<sup>13</sup> There is a lot more evidence for this in Terkourafi (2011) and some more in Allan and Burrige (2006).

<sup>14</sup> Allan (2007, p 1047) defines connotation as follows: ‘The connotations of a language expression are pragmatic effects that arise from encyclopaedic knowledge about its denotation (or reference) and also from experiences, beliefs, and prejudices about the contexts in which the expression is typically used.’ For example, the salient bovine in English language children’s books is, for good reasons, a *cow*: There are more cows than bulls where there is a dominant dairy industry, and also in the beef industry where one bull will service up to 35 cows to maintain stock levels. Thus, for economic reasons (milk production, reproductive value) female bovines are more common and more important than males. *Dog* is a gendered generic that may be used of a bitch. This is because dogs are bred as protectors and working animals; their reproductive functions are peripheral and may even interfere with these primary functions. Hence, by default, the male is the preferred domestic canine, and this pragmatic effect is captured in the connotation of *dog*. (For the connotations of *bitch* see Allan 1992). The connotations of gender for the terms *surgeon*, *nurse*, *secretary/receptionist*, and *motor mechanic* derive from the facts that the typical jobholder in each case is (even today) a gendered stereotype: most surgeons and motor mechanics are male; most nurses and secretary/receptionists are female. These connotations are all, clearly, the pragmatic effects of normative conceptions of typical jobholders.

### 3 The MCPC

The first *OED* meaning for the verb *belch* reads ‘To void wind noisily from the stomach through the mouth, to eructate. (Now vulgar.)’ This means that the act of belching is vulgar, not the word *belch*, which is an orthophemism.<sup>15</sup> This judgement is based on the lexicographer’s intuition. Although any one lexicographer will probably check (where possible) on the judgements of earlier lexicographers, where the buck stops is the intuition of that lexicographer. So, what is this intuition based on? No rationale is given for any of the ex cathedra value judgements in the dictionaries, nor in media outlets,<sup>16</sup> so Allan and Burridge (1991, 2006) proposed one, called the MCPC. A slightly updated version is given in (2):

(2) Among adults, in order to be polite to a casual acquaintance of the opposite sex in a formal situation in a middle class environment, one would normally be expected to use the euphemism or orthophemism rather than the dispreferred counterpart. The dispreferred counterpart would be a dysphemism.

We see a correlation between dysphemism and impoliteness, whereas both euphemism and orthophemism are typically polite; i.e. X-phemisms are the products of (im)politeness and consequently indicate aspects of (im)politeness. Orthophemisms and euphemisms are words or phrases used as an alternative to a dispreferred (undesirable, inappropriate) expression because they avoid possible loss of face by the speaker and also loss of face by the hearer or some third party. A *dispreferred language expression* is simply one that is not felt to be the preferred or desired or appropriate expression.<sup>17</sup> What motivates such feelings is one’s socialization within one’s local sub-culture as part of a wider culture. One example is that under most circumstances the dispreferred response to an invitation is refusal; dispreferred responses to a greeting are a dismissal or a cold stare. An orthophemism (e.g. *faeces*, *vagina*) is typically more formal and more direct (or literal) than the corresponding more colloquial and figurative euphemism (cf. *poo* and *down there*). A dysphemism is a word or phrase with connotations that are offensive either about the denotatum and/or to people addressed or overhearing the utterance (cf. *shit* and *cunt*). Like euphemism, dysphemism is sometimes motivated by fear and distaste, but also by hatred and contempt. Speakers resort to dysphemism to talk about people and things that frustrate and annoy them, things and people they disapprove of and wish to disparage, humiliate, and degrade. Dysphemisms are therefore characteristic of political groups and cliques talking about their opponents, of feminists speaking about men, and also of male larrikins and macho types speaking of women and effete

<sup>15</sup> *Belch* is an orthophemism, *burp* is a euphemism; there is no standard dysphemism, but *mouth fart* would fit the bill.

<sup>16</sup> Legal decisions may be an exception. Allan and Burridge (2006, p. 36 f.) report a legal decision on a charge of using offensive language in which the magistrate’s dismissal of the charge was based on his perception of the language expressions frequently heard on television.

<sup>17</sup> This psycho-emotive characterization of the preferred–dispreferred dichotomy is at odds with its use by conversational analysts like Atkinson and Drew (1979), Bilmes (1988), Toolan (1989) or Boyle (2000).

behaviours. Dysphemistic expressions include curses, name-calling, and any sort of derogatory comment directed towards others in order to insult or wound them. Dysphemism is also a way to let off steam; for example when exclamatory swearwords alleviate frustration or anger (see Allan and Burridge 2009).

Both euphemism and orthophemism are typically polite; they differ in that an orthophemism makes bald-on-record reference to a topic, where a euphemism distances the speaker from it through figurative language, while at the same time being less formal and/or more colloquial—compare orthophemistic *faeces* or *die* with euphemistic *poo* and *pass away*. I do not want to suggest that such classifications are uncontroversial, but some of the controversy arises from the fact that different contexts impose different standards of appropriateness. For instance, although many people abhor the term *cunt*, others wish to reclaim it for in-group use as a marker of social identity, cf. *Cunt: A Declaration of Independence* (Muscio 2002) and ‘Reclaiming Cunt’ in Enslar (2008, p. 101 f.). This is comparable with the adoption of *nigger/nigga* as an acceptable in-group marker among some African-Americans. There are additional reasons for using what in other contexts would be dysphemistic. For example, at moments of intimacy, lovers may pleasurably and inoffensively refer to (what in public are) tabooed body parts using terms that would be dysphemistic in a doctor’s surgery. Among a group of male soldiers in a bar, the term *shithouse* would most likely be non-dysphemistic and if one of them used the euphemism *loo* instead (other than jokingly) he would risk being laughed at and this normally euphemistic term could be regarded as dysphemistic because it would be as insulting to the others as addressing them using baby language. It is useful here to adopt Richard Watts’ term *politic behaviour*: ‘Politic behaviour is that behaviour, linguistic and non-linguistic, which the participants construct as being appropriate to the on-going social interaction’ (Watts 2003, p. 20); it is non-salient, whereas, according to Watts, politeness and impoliteness are both salient. I do not fully agree with Watts in this characterisation of (im)politeness, but the adoption of terms that are frequently judged dysphemistic as effective orthophemisms under certain circumstances can be classed as politic behaviour. Politic behaviour is unmarked behaviour that seeks to maintain the social status quo; it is what is expected under Grice’s ‘cooperative principle’ and Fraser’s ‘conversational contract’. It is in part what underlies Brown and Levinson’s notion that the norm is to maintain face all round. Typically, use of orthophemism is politic behaviour. So, politic behaviour joins (im)politeness as one of the pragmatic functions of the MCPC.

I return to the definition for the MCPC in (2), the first sentence of which reads ‘Among adults, in order to be polite to a casual acquaintance of the opposite sex in a formal situation in a middle class environment, one would normally be expected to use the euphemism or orthophemism rather than the dispreferred counterpart’. Why the mention of (a) ‘[a]mong adults’; (b) ‘a casual acquaintance of the opposite sex’; (c) ‘a formal situation’; (d) ‘in a middle-class environment’ when politeness is not in fact restricted to just these four conditions, i.e. they are not necessary conditions? The brief answer is that (2) identifies the set of the most probable conditions for politeness. I am certainly not suggesting that the MCPC fails to apply between children or between close acquaintances of the same sex or among members of the

highest and the lowest socioeconomic class. However, the biological differences between men and women have led to social differences that mostly reflect sexual tension, for example the constraints placed on the display and accessibility of bodies of women of child-bearing age that do not apply equally to men of the same age,<sup>18</sup> nor do the tolerated differences in relative sexual freedom of women and men. These ensure a tension (that seems to be universal) between adult males and females because of their distinct social roles, even when there is no conscious desire present for sex or romance. The need for a certain social distance is greater among casual acquaintances, because there is no established relationship to encourage overfamiliarity and potentially unwelcome banter.<sup>19</sup> These social differences account for conditions (a) and (b). I should add that the ‘adults’ referred to have the characteristics ascribed to the apocryphal *man on the Clapham omnibus* or *the man who takes the magazines at home and in the evening pushes the lawn mower in his shirt sleeves* or *the man in the street*—all of which were intended to refer to very ordinary persons of either sex. These expressions were used in defining the meaning of *a reasonable man* by Lord Justice Greer in *Hall v. Brookside Club* (*Law reports, King’s Bench Division* Vol. I, 1933, p. 224); but they serve my purpose well.<sup>20</sup> By definition, formal situations<sup>21</sup> require participants to hold social roles that are often institutionally defined, usually by convention but occasionally by explicit regulation, which typically prescribe a readily perceptible social distance among participants. Informal situations encourage camaraderie and a colloquial style that is tolerant of less-overt politeness. All these situations give rise to what Escandell-Vidal (1996), Terkourafi (1999, 2001, 2012) call ‘cognitive frames’ and I refer to as frames or scripts that an individual habitus has recourse to. Hence, (c) is a constraint on (a) and (b).

And (d) limits all of (a), (b), and (c). The phrase ‘middle-class environment’ is not intended to constrain the actual application of the MCPC in real life to members of the socioeconomic class between the upper class and the working class (Murray 1824); in (2), it identifies an idealized constraint based on the cultural norms in a particular segment of Anglo society. Why choose the term *middle class*? Well, just as the newly rich gentfolk of the post-Medieval period strove to adopt the manners of the court and nobility, so does what I am here calling the middle-class strive to adopt those manners of their social superiors which they approve of. The manners

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<sup>18</sup> Informal observation at a local beach (Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia) where nudism is permitted reveals that about 90% of nudists there are male, and the few nude females are almost all accompanied by a male; moreover, a majority of the nude females appear to be postmenopausal. Marina Terkourafi has remarked (pc) that around the Mediterranean, topless young women are more common than naked men, but I note that the genitals are covered, so they are not nude as on Alexandria Bay.

<sup>19</sup> Banter can occur between strangers if there is no risk of insulting the addressee, see Allan (2010, p. 2113) for an example.

<sup>20</sup> Despite Greer LJ displaying his prejudice against the ordinary man by saying ‘God forbid that the standard of manners should be taken from the man on the Clapham omnibus’. Today, we have a more demotic notion of the standard of polite manners.

<sup>21</sup> Formal situations correspond to the ‘formal’ and ‘consultative’ styles of Joos (1961); my ‘colloquial’ style overlaps with his ‘casual’ and ‘intimate’ styles.

of gentlefolk in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries supplied the pattern for proper, and therefore polite, language and behaviour in Britain and its colonies, cf. Campbell (1776, I, p. 352), Withers (1789, p. 161), Leonard (1929, p. 29), Shapin (1994), Culpeper and Demmen (2011). We still describe polite behaviour as *courteous*, the meaning of which is given by the *OED* (1a) as ‘[h]aving such manners as befit the court of a prince; having the bearing of a courtly gentleman in intercourse with others; graciously polite and respectful of the position and feelings of others; kind and complaisant in conduct to others’. Today (and for a several centuries), polite behaviour, including language behaviour, has become a behaviour aspired to by that mass of the community whom I refer to in (2) as ‘middle class’ and a part of their habitus. This is the benchmark for Anglo politeness, but it does not follow that if Queen Elizabeth II is polite that she is consciously trying to be middle class, I am sure she is not; and the same is true of other speakers too—including the likes of Liam Gallagher ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liam\\_Gallagher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liam_Gallagher)). How far this benchmark, which is based on an idealization,<sup>22</sup> extends beyond Anglo communities, I shall briefly return to in Sect. 5; however, as described here, it is adherence to a set of social norms that is broadly similar to Japanese *wakimae* defined by Sachiko Ide (1992, p. 299) as ‘sets of social norms of appropriate behaviour people have to observe in order to be polite in the society [in which] they live. One is polite only if he or she behaves in congruence with the expected norms in a certain situation, in a certain culture and society’.<sup>23</sup>

The MCPC in (2) says that one would normally be expected to use euphemism or orthophemism rather than the dysphemistic dispreferred counterpart. Does this imply an avoidance-based understanding of politeness that renders the MCPC irrelevant to hearer-beneficial acts such as compliments and offers? Certainly not. The MCPC is a conventional means via which individuals interact during language interchange. The default norm is that social interactions are expected to be harmonious; consequently, there are social and legal sanctions against disruptive behaviour. These conditions are reflected in the MCPC which identifies a conventional means to build or maintain harmonious relations. Thus, for instance, when a sighted person offers to help an unknown blind woman across a busy street without any expectation that the favour will be returned in kind, the action is completely compatible with the MCPC, which would inspire the language used when making the offer to be orthophemistic.

<sup>22</sup> Idealization does not devalue (im)politeness any more than the idealization of the boiling point of water as 100°C is useless because, in reality, water boils at a range of temperatures. 100° Celsius is the benchmark for the boiling point of water.

<sup>23</sup> One notable difference is that the MCPC is pragmatic whereas *wakimae* is, according to Ide (1989), dependent on socially obligatory grammatical choices of honorifics, etc., and thus not volitional and pragmatic. I doubt this. In Korean, which has a similar system of honorifics to Japanese, Kim (2003, p. 204 cited in Brown 2011, p. 119) claims that wives use non-honorific *panmal* (반말) to husbands 91% of the time in private, 39% of the time in public, and only 1% of the time in front of their parents-in-law—which is indubitably a volitional, pragmatic use of honorifics.

## 4 Inspecting Application of the MCPC

Having now deconstructed (2), I propose that the judgements of lexicographers (and many in the community at large) that the word *shit* is ‘coarse’, ‘obscene’, ‘insulting’, ‘vulgar’, ‘profane’, ‘taboo’, ‘slang’, ‘impolite’, and ‘offensive’ are based on the MCPC. If Google hits are a guide, *shit* is 34 times more common than *f(a)eces*, eight times more common than *poo*, and nearly seven times more common than the orthophemism and euphemism combined: 566 million hits (*shit*) versus 16.5 million (*f(a)eces*), versus 68 million (*poo*). This is partly a function of the exclamatory function of *shit*, its occurrence in expressions such as *shit faced*, *shit scared*, *shit a brick* etc., and its use in the drug sub-culture, but it is nonetheless striking that a supposed dysphemism is so much more frequent than the corresponding orthophemism and euphemism. Clearly, there must be many contexts in which it is acceptable to use *shit* without causing offence and without being impolite—though it is perhaps stretching a point to say that it is polite, even in (3) where AG is certainly expressing camaraderie and approbation:

- (3) BH: i was just going oh wow congratulations and <latch>  
 AG: SHIT that’s great <latch>  
 BH: yeah so she doesn’t really want to withdraw from everything but she’s taking that opportunity to go (WSC#DPC331:1540–1550)<sup>24</sup>

In (3), ‘SHIT’ almost synonymous with the slang use of *wicked* meaning ‘very good, cool’; it is a dysphemistic locution used with an illocutionary intention that is euphemistic—a euphemistic dysphemism (Allan and BurrIDGE 1991, 2006).<sup>25</sup> This simply reflects the fact that (im)politeness is wedded to what is spoken of, the participants and bystanders, the place, and the time period. Out of context, certain language expressions (and behaviours) are by convention judged either polite or impolite as we see from dictionaries and books of etiquette, and the criterion for such judgements is the MCPC.

Let us consider aspects of (im)polite language in (4), which is from Ch. 3 of *The Big Sleep* (Chandler 1939). The raconteur is Philip Marlowe, financially challenged Los Angeles private detective. The woman is Mrs Vivian Regan née Sternwood, daughter of a millionaire, in whose mansion these interchanges take place. This is their first meeting and they should both be abiding by the MCPC.

- (4) She had a drink. She took a swallow from it and gave me a cool level stare over the rim of the glass.  
 ‘So you’re a private detective,’ she said. ‘I didn’t know they really existed, except in books. Or else they were greasy little men snooping around hotels.’  
 There was nothing in that for me, so I let it drift with the current. ...  
 [They discuss the fact that her husband Rusty Regan had disappeared, and Mrs Regan mistakenly assumed her father had employed Marlowe to find him.]

<sup>24</sup> WSC = Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand Texts; DPC331 is the (dialogue private) conversation number, recorded July 1991. AG and BH are both well-educated young female friends (20–24 years).

<sup>25</sup> The respective definitions of *euphemism* and *orthophemism* make the latter inappropriate.

...Mrs Regan said: ‘Well, how will you go about it then?’

‘How and when did he skip out?’

‘Didn’t Dad tell you?’

I grinned at her with my head on one side. She flushed. Her hot black eyes looked mad. ‘I don’t see what there is to be cagey about,’ she snapped. ‘And I don’t like your manners.’

‘I’m not crazy about yours,’ I said. ‘I didn’t ask to see you. You sent for me. I don’t mind your ritzing me or drinking your lunch out of a Scotch bottle. I don’t mind your showing me your legs. They’re very swell legs and it’s a pleasure to make their acquaintance. I don’t mind if you don’t like my manners. They’re pretty bad. I grieve over them during the long winter evenings. But don’t waste your time trying to cross-examine me.’

She slammed her glass down so hard that it slopped over on an ivory cushion. She swung her legs to the floor and stood up with eyes sparking fire and her nostrils wide. Her mouth was open and her bright teeth glared at me. Her knuckles were white.

‘People don’t talk like that to me,’ she said thickly.

The next time that they meet, both Regan and Marlowe remember and admit to being rude to one another at this meeting and, as readers, we can see why (and there is more than is presented in (4)). In a pattern that continues throughout the book, the rudeness mostly comes from Mrs Regan, though Marlowe is insolent. In this passage, she insults his profession, first by doubting that any such profession exists and then, accepting the inevitable, by claiming that private detectives are ‘greasy little men snooping around hotels’, thereby insulting Marlowe by implying that he is an unsavoury inconsequential character whose work is mostly checking on the sexual peccadilloes of people having extramarital affairs. He ignores the jibe (‘there was nothing in that for me, so I let it drift with the current’), though it perhaps contributes to his perception that Mrs Regan is ‘ritzing’ him—a perception that mostly derives from her overall behaviour towards him which is arrogant, haughty, and supercilious. She is well aware that she is his social superior and the daughter of his current employer, but she could be more gracious in her treatment of him; even though she has the disposition to be rude, she has no right to be. According to the existing social conventions, Marlowe may owe Mrs Regan more deference than he awards her, but her remarks about private detectives are insulting because they decry his social standing and malign his character—which is potentially hurtful and a face affront that performs impoliteness when both parties should be abiding by the MCPC. Note that (im)politeness is a dynamic of social interaction: like most other kinds of social interactive behaviour, an insult can be confronted, reciprocated, or ignored. If it is not unnoticed, it will probably be remembered.

Marlowe insolently fails to answer Mrs Regan’s question whether her father had informed him when Rusty had left: ‘I grinned at her with my head on one side. She flushed. Her hot black eyes looked mad. “I don’t see what there is to be cagey about”, she snapped. “And I don’t like your manners”’. Her response is to redden, look angry, and speak sharply to him; all signs of irritation and anger. She justifiably accuses him of being provocatively cagey and obliquely accuses him of being rude by saying that his manners displease her. This is directly confrontational; she is calling on him to revert to her expectations under the MCPC. He takes up the challenge by somewhat insolently defending his attitude as tit for tat. He reciprocates the complaint about Mrs Regan’s manners and objects that since she had initiated their

encounter, he was not in the position of a supplicant, but she was. He then chides her for her arrogance and castigates her behaviour by suggesting she is something of a lush and, furthermore, immodest ('I don't mind your...drinking your lunch out of a Scotch bottle. I don't mind your showing me your legs'). He then, annoyingly, praises the way she looks and forgives her for thinking him bad-mannered. He even admits he is ill-mannered and pretends to be distressed by this inadequacy. But he ends with a sharp admonishment: 'don't waste your time trying to cross-examine me', which is an indirect way of telling her to shut up, an outright face threat, and indubitably impolite. Understandably, Mrs Regan's response is very angry, much more so than before, and she says 'People don't talk like that to me' which is a bald on record accusation of verbal insult.

What can we draw from this fictional interaction? The first thing I would say is that it rings true: The author has presented an interaction that the reader can believe could quite probably happen in real life. It does not matter that it did not. Raymond Chandler knows enough about human behaviour to recreate in fiction a sequence of interactions in which the participants violated the MCPC. He was, of course, building a story and certainly not concerned with matters of politeness per se, but that is exactly what makes (4) such an excellent vehicle for our discussion.

To people familiar with John Cleese and Connie Booth's *Fawlty Towers*,<sup>26</sup> it may seem odd to exemplify from it an instance of politeness, but consider (5).

- (5) [Basil Fawlty (the hotel manager) at the reception desk of Fawlty Towers.]  
 Basil *(on the phone)* One double room without bath for the 16th, 17th and 18th...yes, and if you'd be so good as to confirm by letter?...thank you so much, goodbye. *(puts the phone down)*  
 Sybil *(bustling in)* Have you made up the bill for room twelve, Basil?  
 Basil No, I haven't yet, no.  
 Sybil Well, they're in a hurry. Polly says they didn't get their alarm call. And Basil, please get that picture up—it's been there for a week. *(goes into office)*  
 (Cleese and Booth 1988, p. 3)

This is the opening of the episode 'A touch of class' (first broadcast in September 1975) and it finds Basil, later revealed to be an economically unsuccessful, rude, misanthropic, cowardly bully, being polite (or, at least, politic) to a client who has made a phone booking. It fits the contemporary hotel script by seeking confirmation of the room type and dates, while asking for written confirmation of the booking. It ends with a conventional statement of gratitude; and although the 'thank you so much' instead of *thank you very much* is a trifle gushy, it does not overstep the acceptable bounds of correct behaviour for a polite/politic interchange with a stranger. Governed by the MCPC this initial sequence of utterances by Basil Fawlty is polite. On the first appearance of his termagant wife,<sup>27</sup> Sybil speaks sharply to him; yet although implicitly issuing a directive, she is also politic if not polite. The only mark of her disdain for him is the use of his name rather than an endearment, which adds

<sup>26</sup> For background, see [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fawlty\\_Towers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fawlty_Towers).

<sup>27</sup> Sybil is variously described dysphemistically by Basil in later episodes as a 'sour old rat', 'puff-adder', 'dragon', 'piranha fish', 'nest of vipers', 'sabre-toothed tart', and 'rancorous, coiffured old sow'.



a hard edge to the question. But late-twentieth-century behaviour between husbands and wives permits relaxation of the constraints of the MCPC: Remember that the MCPC is an idealized benchmark against which the analyst will compare instances of behaviour in real life or in fiction. Between husband and wife, the lack of social difference, and in the late-twentieth century also a lack of power differential, allows for greater directness and expectation of mutual imposition than is normal between casual acquaintances. This makes Basil's negative response explicable, though he could have softened it with an apology and/or explanation, as in *No, I'm sorry, I haven't had time to do it yet, I've been....* This would have lowered the potential antagonism between the spouses. Sybil's response is utterly reasonable. The first two sentences explain Sybil's previous question and indirectly demand that the bill be made up quickly. There is also an implied criticism in 'they didn't get their alarm call'; we recognise that it is probably an accusation against Basil for not giving the occupants of room 12 their alarm call, and this is later justified when Basil apologises to them for just this oversight. The final sentence is a nice example of hectoring—or at least its onset—in the criticism of Basil for failing to hang 'that picture' during the previous week. Do we judge Sybil to be being impolite here? Not really, although she does adopt a recognisably domineering tone, which becomes a hallmark of their relationship. Sybil is Basil's wife and she makes it clear that she disapproves the failures she detects in him. If we rely on our expectations of what the running of a nondescript low-star hotel would require, we cannot judge her criticisms unwarranted. The fact that her linguistic expression is domineering rather than deferential and respectful is part of the authors' deliberate characterisation of her persona. As I have said, I do not believe this makes us judge her as impolite. Once again, Watts' term *politic behaviour* is useful for behaviour that is not impolite even if it seems barely acceptable to refer to it as polite.

My comments on the (im)politeness in (4) were based on the reported judgements of the participants as well as my own observations, although the participants cannot be interrogated (they are fictional and author is dead); this is consistent with Haugh 2007. My comments on the (im)politeness in (5) have no direct sanction from the participants, yet I believe they are justified, even though another observer could take a different view. If that were to happen, it would arise from a different interpretation of the text in (5) in the light of what may also be a different interpretation of the MCPC. All interpretations of (im)politeness are subject to individual variation as the result of differing experiences and beliefs—differences in individual habitus. This does not invalidate the MCPC which describes a socialized, largely untaught, convention that serves as a benchmark for intuitions of (im)politeness. One might compare the differences in individual habitus to individual differences in language use and understanding: something that only rarely leads to communication breakdown. There is enough flexibility in our understanding of ourselves and others to allow for social interaction to proceed uninterrupted by dispute even when the ideas and beliefs of the participants diverge.

Finally, consider the content of an email I received out of the blue in May 2012 with the subject line ‘hello from OUP’. It reads as in (6):<sup>28</sup>

(6) Dear Prof. Allan,  
 Hello. I’m the linguistics editor for OUP in the US. Cynthia Read and I were talking about your 1991 book with us, *Euphemism and Dysphemism*, and how your work has held up well over the years. I understand you’re editing an Oxford Handbook for my colleagues in the UK. If that’s not sapping all your time, I’d be eager to hear about your latest projects. Perhaps there could be a revised an[d] expanded (and even re-titled) *Euphemism and Dysphemism* at some point.  
 Best wishes,  
 Brian  
 [Signature with full name and contact details]

I do not know whether Watts would regard this email as displaying politic behaviour or polite behaviour, but my own reaction was that it is polite. I shall explain why. This was a note from someone (Brian) with whom I was completely unacquainted, so he addressed me in a formal/consultative fashion with my title + surname, yet—with an informal nuance—he abbreviated *Professor* to ‘Prof.’. The writer then uses a conversational style greeting, immediately followed by an identifying description. In order to establish some human common ground, this is immediately followed by a reference to Cynthia Read, a previous linguistics editor at OUP New York, the person responsible for commissioning and aiding in the publication of *Euphemism and Dysphemism* (Allan and Burridge 1991) and with whom I have maintained cordial relations over the years. Brian then appeals to what Brown and Levinson would call my positive face by (flatteringly and hyperbolically) praising the longevity of the 1991 book and then showing that he is aware of a more recent project of mine with OUP (a handbook on the history of linguistics, Allan 2013a). This is a means of dwelling on my ties with OUP and, by extension, with the writer himself as linguistics editor for OUP New York. Brian next attends to my negative face (‘if it’s not sapping all your time’), which functions as an implicit apology for asking me to take the time to respond to his email by telling him of my upcoming projects. Here, he pays attention to my positive face once again, because of the implication that such projects may potentially be of interest as a publishing opportunity for OUP. Part of the common ground evoked here is that OUP is a highly prestigious publisher. From a politeness perspective, the final sentence is interesting. It continues the flattering suggestion that OUP is interested in publishing my work<sup>29</sup> by suggesting a revised, expanded edition of *Euphemism and Dysphemism*. At the same time it is subtly hinted by the parenthetical ‘and even retitled’ that a different title might improve marketability: because this implies a mild criticism of the old title, it is very tentative and its face-threatening potential is reduced to the absolute minimum; I cannot think of a way it could be further mitigated other than by not mentioning it

<sup>28</sup> Published with permission. For the reader who does not already know, OUP=Oxford University Press.

<sup>29</sup> In fact *Euphemism and Dysphemism* was co-authored with Kate Burridge who would, of course, collaborate in any revision. There is no slight to Kate in Brian’s email, and for the sake of simplicity I am concentrating on my own part in the venture. Forgive me, Kate.

at all—which is not really an option if OUP is proposing to reissue a revised version of the book under a new title. Finally, I note a standard well-wishing farewell, and an informal friendly first name only sign off, followed by a formal signature with appropriate contact details.

Brian certainly abided by the MCPC in his email, and yet moved towards camaraderie by his quasi-conversational style and by establishing common ground for our interaction at a personal level and paying attention to my positive face while carefully mitigating any statement that might be even slightly face threatening.

## 5 Conclusion

Sentences are not *ipso facto* polite, nor are languages more or less polite. It is only speakers who are polite, and then only if their utterances reflect an adherence to the obligations they carry in that particular conversation. (Fraser 1990, p. 233)

The ‘obligations’ that Fraser refers to are, for Anglos, those defined in (2). I have discussed (im)politeness in some detail in the course of this chapter. One thing I have not done is differentiated two different approaches to politeness (Watts, Ide and Ehlich (eds) 1992; Eelen 2001; Watts 2003; Terkourafi 2011, 2012): ‘politeness1’, or lay notions of politeness; and ‘politeness2’, the object of inquiry in social and linguistic theory that delivers an analytical perspective on politeness1. As Terkourafi points out, the interesting target of inquiry is politeness1 (perhaps explained via politeness2), and politeness1 is what I assume the MCPC applies to—though the MCPC itself, as described in (2), falls under politeness2. It seems certain that face concerns have consequences for (im)politeness, so I presented an account of face that dispenses with objections to the Brown and Levinson account, emphasizing the importance of social identity rather than individual identity, and thus favouring an account of face work that is close to Spencer-Oatey’s concept of rapport management. Nonetheless, I found it useful when discussing text (6) to make recourse to the Brown and Levinson notions of positive and negative face.

(Im)politeness is a set of dispositions that govern social interaction within a social group (community of practice) that render an act undertaken in a particular context appropriate or inappropriate according to the normal standards of behaviour within that group, which serve to establish criteria for assessing (im)politeness. (Im)politeness is therefore a set of conventional behaviours and a manifestation of habitus. Although this has been widely recognized for decades, the criteria underlying intuitions about what is polite or impolite, although discussed, remained undefined in the literature until the MCPC was proposed in Allan and Burridge (1991). The MCPC as defined in (2) is a frame or cultural script: a benchmark for behaviour.

In this chapter, I have deconstructed the MCPC and explained its components. The MCPC names social constraints on the use of language. X-phemisms indicate aspects of (im)politeness. The use of orthophemisms seems to equate with Watts’ ‘politic behaviour’, which is not impolite and will often be described in ordinary discourse as ‘polite’. Politic behaviour is typically unmarked whereas euphemism

and dysphemism tend to indicate marked language, which is why Watts described them as (typically) salient.

A limitation of the MCPC is that it is a default criterion which works well for decontextualized language, but—being an idealization—it cannot directly apply to the particular circumstances of an interaction in which participants and situations do not match those stated in (2). We observed some of this in the discussion of (5). The MCPC is a benchmark for behaviour: an ideal or abstraction—like Chomsky’s ideal speaker–hearer. Serving as a benchmark, the MCPC is not in practice restricted in application merely to male+female dyads, nor to adults, nor to those from the middle class: The working-class characters in the British sitcom *The Royle Family*<sup>30</sup> utilize the MCPC and, from what I know, so does Queen Elizabeth II.

Another limitation is that the MCPC is not obviously applicable across space and time to all language communities. (Im)politeness as a means of managing (aspects of) social interaction is apparent in all communities. In the dictionaries of languages other than English, lexicographers make the same kind of judgements about the (im)politeness of certain words and phrases as those that led us to postulate the MCPC. Where do their intuitions come from? Where do the judgements of (im)politeness come from in works such as Matsumoto (1988), Ide (1989), Matsumoto (1989; Japanese), Gu (1990), Mao (1994), Lee-Wong (2000; Chinese), Sifianou (1992, 2011; Greek), Terkourafi (2001; Cypriot Greek), Ruhi (2007; Turkish)? The answer is: some counterpart to the MCPC which, though its constituents will be different in particulars, will name social constraints on the use of language that are designed to maintain harmonious social relations within the community. I have already noted the similarity between the MCPC and Japanese *wakimae* as described in Ide (1992) and elsewhere; this is not to claim they are the same notion but rather counterparts in different sociocultural systems that entail different conditions (for instance, Japanese politeness is more affected by a demonstrable respect that needs to be shown to others along with a humbling of self than is the norm in Anglo societies, cf. Haugh 2004, inter alios). Closer comparison of the MCPC with accounts of (im)politeness in non-Anglo communities and figuring out criteria by which adjustments are made on the fly to the MCPC in interactions where real participants and situations do not match those idealized in (2), I leave for future research.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Created by Caroline Aherne and Craig Cash, see [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Royle\\_Family](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Royle_Family).

<sup>31</sup> At the University of Cape Town, Patience Mususa seconded by Ana Deumert drew my attention to the difference between respect and politeness. Certainly, they are different concepts, but the demonstration of behavioural and linguistic respect or disrespect (where appropriate) are, I believe, judged polite and impolite, respectively. But there is more to be said on this topic.

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# Impoliteness Strategies

Jonathan Culpeper

**Abstract** The “impoliteness strategy”, a kind of parallel to the “politeness strategy”, has dominated research for decades and is still current. However, the notion of a “strategy” is poorly understood and rarely defined. This chapter begins by critically examining this notion, as it is used in linguistics. It argues that in politeness studies it has been overly focused on the idea of a rational linguistic means of achieving certain ends or goals. That a strategy might also involve the coordination of communication through routine and shared linguistic means that are recognised within particular communities seems to have been largely overlooked. The next part of this chapter outlines Culpeper’s (1996) taxonomy of impoliteness strategies, and follows with a critical review. It notes that most problems and controversies lie at the more abstract level of the “superstrategy”. Two particularly controversial areas are discussed. One is the relationship between directness and impoliteness strategies, and especially whether there is some correlation with the degree of offence caused. The other is the relationship between impoliteness strategies and context. The final part of the chapter outlines a more recent bottom-up framework of impoliteness strategies or triggers, and one that, echoing Terkourafi’s (e.g., 2001) work on politeness, places impoliteness conventionalized for particular contexts of use at the centre.

**Keywords** Context · Conventionalization · Directness · Formulae · Impoliteness · Politeness · Strategy

## 1 Introduction

Impoliteness strategies seem to be old news, having been discussed, especially in sociopragmatics, for about 35 years, only a little less than politeness strategies. Nevertheless, as we shall see, they still infuse much research, especially applied

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research. Oddly, no paper has attempted a critical review of impoliteness strategies. In fact, what exactly an impoliteness strategy is often goes unsaid. This chapter aims to fill this gap.

The following section begins the chapter by considering the notion of “strategy”. Section 3 outlines a taxonomy of impoliteness strategies, and considers their validity. Section 4 critically reviews impoliteness strategies, both so-called super-strategies and output strategies, to use Brown and Levinson’s (1987) terminology. The following two sections address particular problems that impoliteness strategies encounter, namely, directness and context. Finally, Section 7 summarises an alternative bottom-up model of impoliteness strategies, or rather impoliteness triggers.

## 2 The Strategy

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term *strategy* hails from ancient Greece, where it had the sense of ‘military leadership’. This sense survives in the meaning of the collocation “military strategy”, that is, a plan to achieve certain military objectives. Within linguistics broadly conceived, we find a range of relevant collocations, including “rhetorical strategy”, “text strategy”, “discourse strategy”, “communication strategy”, “(text) comprehension strategy”, “pragmatic strategy”, “communicative strategy” and “politeness strategy”.

Rhetorical strategies, as the name clearly suggests, evolved from classical rhetoric. Aristotle, in his *Rhetoric* (Book 1, Chap. 2) written in the fourth century BC, proposed that rhetoric concerns the ability to see the available means of persuasion. These “means” subsequently became labelled strategies, or devices, tactics, and so on. Text strategies, associated with text linguistics, have been elaborated by Nils Erik Enkvist, who wrote that they “involve an adjustment of goals to resources or vice versa” (1987, p. 204). Discourse strategies form the bedrock of interactional sociolinguistics, as elaborated by Gumperz (1982). Gumperz (1982, p. 29) introduced the notion to meet the

need for a sociolinguistic theory which accounts for the communicative functions of linguistic variability and for its relation to speaker’s goals without reference to the untestable functionalist assumptions about conformity or nonconformance to closed systems of norms.

The term “communication strategy” evolved in the context of language learning in the 1970s, in order to describe “language devices used to overcome communication problems related to interlanguage deficiencies” (Dörnyei and Scott 1997, p. 182). Text comprehension strategies are associated with text comprehension, and, notably, the model of text comprehension devised by van Dijk and Kintsch (1983). One of the key insights here is that cognition is strategic. For example, one can have strategies regarding how one distributes one’s attention. The notion of pragmatic strategy seems to overlap substantially with communicative strategy, and partly overlaps with the first three notions, rhetorical strategy, text strategy and discourse strategy. The overlap with rhetoric, for example, is particularly clear in

Leech (1983), who adopts the term because of “the focus it places on a goal-oriented speech situation, in which S uses language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of H” (1983, p. 15). Despite the fact that Leech’s model of pragmatics is very much oriented to linguistic acts as the means by which certain goals are achieved, much of it focuses on pragmatic principles as communicative constraints, not on elaborating pragmatic strategies. Where pragmatic strategies are mentioned (e.g. 1983, pp. 97–99), it is to discuss particular linguistic manifestations that are shaped by those constraints.

Brown and Levinson (1987) deploy the notion of the politeness strategy. Like Leech (1983), they have in mind “rational means-ends reasoning” (1987, p. 7). Their notion of strategy involves the meaning whereby “people can be seen to be doing something before doing, or in order to do, something else” (1987, p. 8). They elaborate:

We continue to use the word “strategy”, despite its connotations of conscious deliberation, because we can think of no other word that will imply a rational element while covering both (a) innovative plans of action, which may still be (but need not be) unconscious, and (b) routines—that is, previously constructive plans whose original rational origin is still preserved in their construction, despite their present automatic application as ready-made programmes. (1987, p. 85)

The idea of mapping out logical, rational choices in order to achieve particular goals is typical of the pragmatics of that era. For example, in their scheme, one choice is between doing the face threatening act (FTA) and not doing the FTA. They propose five “superstrategies” (general orientations to face) that are systematically related to the degree of face threat. A rational actor—a “Model Person” (Brown and Levinson 1987)—will select an appropriate superstrategy to counterbalance the expected face threat. The superstrategies are: Bald-on-record, Positive politeness, Negative politeness, Off-record and Don’t do the FTA. For the superstrategies Positive politeness, Negative politeness and Off-record, they develop charts which display hierarchies of strategies embedded within the particular superstrategy. For example, “claiming common ground” is a lower-order strategy embedded within the superstrategy of Positive politeness. They use the term “output strategies” to denote “the final choice of linguistic means to realise the highest goals” (1987, p. 92). Thus, for example, on claiming common ground, the output strategy of presupposing common ground might be achieved.

Each of these notions of strategy has in common the fact that strategy is conceived of, at least in part, as a means of achieving a particular end, though of course each defines the notion in somewhat different ways and associates it with a different field. Some of those differences are important. Indeed, it is worth noting part (b) of Brown and Levinson’s quotation above. Although the elaboration of politeness routines and formulae as output strategies constitutes a large part of their work, there is in fact very little discussion of what these are, though there is a nod towards the idea that they might involve conventions which themselves may—they cite Lewis (1969)—involve rationality (1987, pp. 85–87). This stands in contrast with the approach taken by Gumperz:

I believe that understanding presupposes conversational involvement. A general theory of discourse strategies must therefore gain by specifying the linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge that needs to be shared if conversational involvement is to be maintained, and then go on to deal with what it is about the nature of conversational inference that makes for cultural, subcultural and situational specificity of interpretation. (1982, p. 3)

Instead of an emphasis on the speaker using particular means to pursue particular ends, we find an emphasis on the “shared” “linguistic and sociocultural knowledge” that enables understandings of strategies in conversation to proceed. Indeed, Gumperz puts conversational interaction at the heart of his model. The first sentence of his book reads: “Communication is a social activity requiring the coordinated efforts of two or more individuals” (1982, p. 1). In contrast, Brown and Levinson’s model is about the *speaker* selecting strategies to achieve particular goals. The role of the hearer or target interacting with the speaker is barely mentioned.

A further point that Gumperz emphasises is methodology: “Empirical methods must be found to determine the extent to which underlying knowledge is shared” (1982, p. 30). The thrust of Brown and Levinson’s work is the traditional one of proposing a model and then testing its predictions against the data. It is not to derive empirically the model from the data, though clearly the data must have informed numerous aspects of the model. To be fair, every output strategy from their model is illustrated, but that does not necessarily mean that it is routine, which is purported to be part of their understanding of a strategy. And even if it is routine, we do not know the extent to which it is, the extent to which knowledge of that strategy is shared. Are some strategies frequent and well known, and others less so? What exactly is understood by the strategy and in what context?

In this chapter, I take strategies to be ways of achieving particular goals in interaction that are conventional for a particular community. I understand conventionalization here in the same way as Terkourafi (e.g. 2003), namely, items conventionalized for a particular context of use.

### 3 Impoliteness Strategies: A Taxonomy and its Validity

Culpeper (1996) was specifically designed to answer Craig et al.’s (1986) call for a comprehensive treatment of face-attack strategies. To an extent, the framework developed there is the face attack ‘flip side’ of Brown and Levinson (1987). As this is also true of Lachenicht (1980) and Austin (1987, 1990), Culpeper (1996) is not the first Brown and Levinson-inspired impoliteness model, though it should be noted that all these models differ considerably in theoretical slant and in the detail. One aspect they all have in common is the fact that they simply adopt Brown and Levinson’s (1987) notion of strategy, without devoting any space to its definition and discussion.

The impoliteness superstrategies and example output strategies proposed in Culpeper (1996, pp. 356–357) are as follows (incorporating one revision proposed in Culpeper 2005):

## Impoliteness Superstrategies and Output Strategies

**BALD-ON-RECORD IMPOLITENESS:** the FTA is performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimized.

**POSITIVE IMPOLITENESS:** the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants, e.g. *Ignore, snub the other*—fail to acknowledge the other's presence. *Exclude the other from an activity. Disassociate from the other*—for example, deny association or common ground with the other; avoid sitting together. *Be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic. Use inappropriate identity markers*—for example, use title and surname when a close relationship pertains, or a nickname when a distant relationship pertains. *Use obscure or secretive language*—for example, mystify the other with jargon, or use a code known to others in the group, but not the target. *Seek disagreement*—select a sensitive topic. *Make the other feel uncomfortable*—for example, do not avoid silence, joke or use small talk. Use taboo words—swear, or use abusive or profane language. *Call the other names*—use derogatory nominations.

**NEGATIVE IMPOLITENESS:** the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants, e.g. *Frighten*—instill a belief that action detrimental to the other will occur. *Condescend, scorn or ridicule*—emphasize your relative power. Be contemptuous. Do not treat the other seriously. Belittle the other (e.g. use diminutives). *Invalidate the other's space*—literally (e.g. position yourself closer to the other than the relationship permits) or metaphorically (e.g. ask for or speak about information which is too intimate given the relationship). *Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect*—personalize, use the pronouns “I” and “you”. *Put the other's indebtedness on record. Violate the structure of conversation*—interrupt.

**OFF-RECORD IMPOLITENESS:** the FTA is performed by means of an implicature but in such a way that one attributable intention clearly outweighs any others.

**WITHHOLD POLITENESS:** the absence of politeness work where it would be expected. For example, failing to thank somebody for a present may be taken as deliberate impoliteness.

## Impoliteness Meta-Strategy

**SARCASM OR MOCK POLITENESS:** the FTA is performed with the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, and thus remain surface realisations.

It should be stressed that the output strategies are not closed lists (cf. “this list is not exhaustive” Culpeper 1996, p. 357), just as Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies are not closed.

As with Brown and Levinson (1987), from a pragmatic point of view what underlies these strategies is Grice's (1975) cooperative principle (CP). Bald-on-record impoliteness, for example, involves upholding the CP, whilst Off-record impoliteness involves flouting it. Sarcasm or mock impoliteness has its roots in Leech's Grice-based irony principle (1983). Describing impoliteness in terms of a *cooperative* principle may sound like a non-starter. However, that impression is based on a misunderstanding of the CP. As has been argued by a number of scholars

(e.g. Thomas 1986; Pavlidou 1991), the CP applies to cooperation in the exchange of information, not in facilitating social goals. To be impolite, one still needs to cooperate in the exchange of information, i.e. uphold the CP at some level, in order to get one's impolite message across (for further elaboration with respect to impoliteness, see Bousfield 2008: Chap. 2).

The impoliteness output strategies outlined in Culpeper (1996) seem to have stood the test of time, the same basic set having been applied in a number of studies (e.g. Bousfield 2008; Cashman 2006; Lorenzo-Dus et al. 2011; Shum and Lee 2013; Murphy in press). Those strategies had been largely devised through doing qualitative and then (semi-) quantitative analysis of impoliteness events. Consequently, it is not a surprise that they can account for data. However, that does not prove that they are routine, that they are strategies that are known within particular communities. So, Culpeper (2011, Chap. 3) took a different tack. It considered meta-pragmatic impoliteness commentaries—people talking or writing about ways in which they or others are impolite. More specifically, it analysed manuals on and parodies of rudeness. These represent communities talking about strategies which they recognise and which have conventional status. By way of illustration, here I will revisit my analysis of Catherine Rondina and Dan Workman's (2005) *Rudeness: Deal with it if you please*, a serious manual, being part of a series that "helps adolescents cope with conflicts in everyday life and aims to promote peaceful homes, schools, and communities" (backcover). However, I will not simply repeat that analysis here but show how the strategies listed reflect the output strategies of Culpeper (1996).

This manual is not restricted to narrow matters of etiquette: "Demonstrating good manners goes way beyond not talking with your mouth full. Rudeness can lead to hurt feelings, misunderstanding, and ultimately conflict" (backcover). Two lists of "don'ts" are given (p. 4 and 19). They include non-verbal behaviours such as burping. The more language-based ones are listed below, followed by an impoliteness strategy classification in square brackets:

- Insulting someone to their face. [Positive impoliteness: Call the other names]
- Embarrass or insult others. [Positive impoliteness: Make the other feel uncomfortable. Call the other names]
- Avoiding or ignoring someone. [Positive impoliteness: Ignore, snub the other]
- Don't use crude language. [Positive impoliteness: Use taboo words]
- Talking back to your parents or teachers.<sup>1</sup> [Negative impoliteness: Condescend, scorn or ridicule]
- Interrupt when someone is speaking. [Negative impoliteness: Violate the structure of conversation]
- Forgetting to say "please" or "thank you". [Withhold politeness]

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<sup>1</sup> Patronising behaviour is perhaps more usually associated with cases where the producer has a more obvious claim to relative power. However, people can engineer a power relationship that suggests that the interlocutor has less power than they think they have. Talking back to a parent implies that the word of the other is far from decisive; it challenges a power hierarchy—it is patronising.

This manual is designed for the North American context. However, even from my British cultural perspective, I have no difficulty at all in recognising these “rules”. What emerges, then, maps quite well onto the set of impoliteness strategies outlined above. This is not to say, however, this will always be the case. Just as routines vary according to different communities of practice so do strategies. And it is wise to repeat the point that the set of strategies outlined above is not exhaustive.

The reader would have observed that I have in the last two paragraphs largely been discussing the validity of the output strategies. The superstrategies have proved far more problematic, as I will elaborate in the following section:

### 4 Impoliteness Strategies: Critique

The impoliteness strategies outlined in the previous section have been challenged, and, not surprisingly, largely on the same grounds that people have challenged Brown and Levinson’s work. Blas Arroyo (2001; also, summarised in Cashman 2006, pp. 223–224) offers a relevant, insightful critique of several aspects of Culpeper’s (1996) model.

First, Blas Arroyo (2001, p. 21) observes that the superstrategy Bald-on-record impoliteness is only briefly described and not exemplified. He assumes that this is because it is difficult to distinguish from Positive or Negative impoliteness (Blas Arroyo 2001, p. 22). Given this difficulty, he recommends that the category be abandoned. Bousfield’s (2008) solution is similar: he brings face into the definition of the Bald-on-record superstrategy, having rightly observed that Bald-on-record can orient to face too. It is worth briefly observing at this point that Viejobueno (2005) makes the same observation of Off-record impoliteness, namely, that impolite implications can orient to positive or negative face. In fact, this issue of distinguishing Bald-on-record from Positive or Negative impoliteness had not been the main concern in Culpeper et al. (2003). Rather, this was the difficulty of identifying any utterance that was both fully cooperative in a Gricean sense and not mitigated by the kind of contexts described for Bald-on-record *politeness* (e.g. an emergency situation). Culpeper et al. (2003, p. 1556) supplied the following example of Bald-on-record impoliteness. S1 is a clamper who is preparing to ticket a car in a road next to a primary school; S2 and S3 are parents of children who often park in order to drop their children into the school. S4 is the school’s headmistress.

- [1] S1: we’ll start with you madam <to S4> I work for T F M parking okay
- S2: council has made no attempt to respond
- S3: excuse me excuse me you are
- S4:
  
- S1: I did the first time I met you okay where’s your car
- S2:
- S3: a parking attendant alright act like one okay *shut up and act like a parking attendant*
- S4:

The claim was that the part in italics counts as Bald-on-record impoliteness, because it consists of two imperative commands that are deployed baldly with the purpose of aggravating the face of the parking attendant, and does not take place in the kind of context (e.g. an emergency) whereby it can still be counted as politeness. When we wrote that paper, this was, in fact, the only example we thought we could quote as an example of Bald-on-record. Given that we had only examined one data type, namely, interactions between traffic wardens and car owners, we did not feel that we were in a position to conclude that the category Bald-on-record impoliteness was therefore of no consequence (it might have been more evident in other contexts). In retrospect, I would not be entirely happy with interpreting even this example as Bald-on-record impoliteness, and I will discuss this further in Section 5.

Second, Blas Arroyo (2001, p. 22) observes how difficult it is to decide whether some output strategies should be considered Positive or Negative impoliteness superstrategies. For example, he suggests that the output strategy “condescend, scorn or ridicule”, would be more clearly a threat to positive than negative face (2001, p. 22). Regarding the specific output strategy, “condescend, scorn or ridicule”, the rationale for considering that as a negative impoliteness flows from Brown and Levinson (1987). Negative politeness is an awkward mix of things. It should be remembered that it includes deference. “Condescend, scorn or ridicule” is in some ways the opposite of deference. Rather than treating the other as powerful, one treats them as powerless. Culpeper (2005) adopts Spencer-Oatey’s (e.g. 2008) more sophisticated categories, involving three types of face and two types of sociality rights. “Condescend, scorn or ridicule” neatly fits the category of “equity rights” violations. Nevertheless, it is absolutely the case that one and the same strategy can often be viewed from different perspectives. For example, an interruption may, in specific contexts, attack negative face by impeding someone, but it may also imply that the interruptee’s opinion is not valued—a positive face issue. Having said that, as pointed out in Culpeper (2005, p. 42), it is often the case that there are primary effects for one type of face, and maybe secondary for another. A further problem is that one and the same strategy can contain parts that orient to different types of face. The mixing of Positive and Negative impoliteness was something we noted in Culpeper et al. (2003).

Blas Arroyo’s solution is to get rid of the negative and positive distinction, and Bousfield (2008) takes a similar line. That, to me, seems to be throwing the baby out with the bathwater, as it sacrifices the occasions when—as demonstrated by numerous studies—the distinction has been shown to be analytically useful. This view is also put forward by Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2010, pp. 543–544). My preference is for reconceptualization, something that has been pursued, for example, by Haugh (2006) and Arundale (2010). With respect to impoliteness, Culpeper (2005) took some steps in that direction by utilising Spencer-Oatey’s (e.g. 2008) model of rapport management. There is no space within this chapter to fully elaborate that model, but a good sense of it can be gained from the summary presented in Table 1. One might note Brown and Levinson’s notions do not disappear but are subsumed: Positive face overlaps with that of quality face, and negative face overlaps with that of equity rights. Cashman (2006) demonstrated how these categories could produce a more refined account in her impoliteness work on Spanish–English bilingual children.



**Table 1** Categories in the rapport management framework. (Spencer-Oatey 2002, 2005, 2008)

<p><i>Face</i> (Defined with reference to Goffman (1967, p. 5): “The positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [sic] by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact” (2008, p. 13)</p>	<p><i>Quality face</i> (Related to the self as an individual): “We have a fundamental desire for people to evaluate us positively in terms of our personal qualities, e.g. our confidence, abilities, appearance etc.” (2002, p. 540)</p>
	<p><i>Relational face</i> (Related to the self in relationship with others): “[s]ometimes there can also be a relational application; for example, being a talented leader and/or a kind-hearted teacher entails a relational component that is intrinsic to the evaluation” (2008, p. 15)</p>
	<p><i>Social identity face</i> (Related to the self as a group member): “We have a fundamental desire for people to acknowledge and uphold our social identities or roles” (2002, p. 540); “[social identity face involves] any group that a person is a member of and is concerned about. This can include small groups like one’s family, and larger groups like one’s ethnic group, religious group or nationality group” (2005, p. 106)</p>
<p><i>Sociality rights</i> Defined as the “fundamental social entitlements that a person effectively claims for him/herself in his/her interactions with others” (2008, p. 13)</p>	<p><i>Equity rights:</i> “We have a fundamental belief that we are entitled to personal consideration from others, so that we are treated fairly: that we are not unduly imposed upon, that we are not unfairly ordered about and that we are not taken advantage of or exploited” (2008, p. 16)</p> <p><i>Association rights:</i> “We have a fundamental belief that we are entitled to social involvement with others, in keeping with the type of relationship that we have with them” (2008, p. 16)</p>

Third, Blas Arroyo rightly observes that the output strategies identified in both Brown and Levinson (1987) and Culpeper (1996) are not always constituted in the same way. Some are clearly physical and interactional, whilst others are strictly linguistic or discourse related. I assume that strategies like “frighten” or “be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic” comprise the former, whereas “explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect (personalize, use the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘You’)” or “use inappropriate identity markers” constitute the latter. Blas Arroyo’s solution to the problem is to distinguish between strategies, which are “attitudinal and behavioral tactics that are used by the participants” (2001, pp. 23–24; as translated in Cashman 2006, p. 224), and verbal resources, which are the linguistic and paralinguistic resources or means by which the strategies are carried out. Actually, this is not so far from what Brown and Levinson (1987) try to do. Recollect that they use the term “output strategies” to denote “the final choice of linguistic means to realise the highest goals” (1987, p. 92). The problem, I suggest, has come about largely as a solution to a practical problem. Brown and Levinson (1987) proposes output strategies such as “intensify interest to H” or Culpeper (1996) proposes “be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic” as “umbrella categories” for the wide array of specific linguistic resources that might fall within them. All those specific linguistic resources within the umbrella categories are equally valid, according to the definition of strategy deployed in these works. It is impractical to list them all, yet there is no mechanism for the selection of just a few. Remember that the notion of “routine” is underplayed in these studies. In Section 8, I will discuss alternative approaches which do focus on the routine or the conventional, something which can more easily act as a mechanism for selection.

This section has not yet discussed two of the biggest problems concerning the strategies, namely, their organisation according to directness and the role of context. The following section will focus on directness, and then I will turn to context.

## 5 The Problem of Directness

The main dimension along which Brown and Levinson’s (1987) superstrategies for performing politeness are ordered is directness. At one end we have Bald-on-record and at the other end we have Off-record (or even Don’t do the FTA), and in between we have Negative and Positive politeness. There are a number of problems here. I will discuss two: the nature of directness and the correlation between directness and impoliteness.

The unit of analysis for the early politeness and impoliteness works was the speech act. These works were informed by Searle’s classic works on speech acts (e.g. 1969). In Searle’s (1975) view, the notion of directness concerns (mis)matchings of syntax and speech act, and Grice is needed to guide the inferencing which bridges the gap created by a mismatch. However, although (mis)matchings of syntax and speech act are an important aspect of directness, they are but one aspect. It is better to think of the dimension as the explicitness with which the meaning of the

utterance it signalled, something that is better in tune with Grice. Following Culpeper and Haugh (2014), I will refer to this as “pragmatic explicitness”, and claim that it is based on the transparency of three things: the illocutionary point, the target, and the semantic content (see also Weizman 1985, 1989, for relevant discussion of directness). The transparency of the illocutionary point is roughly what Searle was talking about. Transparency is lost when a speech act is not achieved through its base sentence type, or more broadly, where one act is achieved through performing another; for example, saying that somebody is not being quiet (an assertion) to imply that they should be (i.e. a request). The transparency of the target can also increase explicitness. Compare *Be quiet!* with *You be quiet!* The latter example is more explicit in picking out the target through the use of *you*. And the transparency of the semantic content can also increase explicitness: compare *Be quiet!* with *Be noiseless!* In this case, *quiet* has a closer match with the desired state than the circumlocution *noiseless*.

Now let us reconsider example [1], the *shut up and act like a parking attendant* example of the previous section, which was cited as the example of Bald-on-record impoliteness given in Culpeper et al. (2003). There are indeed imperatives here, and so a good match between the illocutionary point of a request/order and the syntax. In the previous sentence, *you are a parking attendant*, the target is clearly picked out by the pronoun. However, in terms of the transparency of semantic content, things are not straightforward. The issue lies with *shut up*. “Be quiet”, for example, would be a more transparent expression. *Shut up* as presumably based on a metonymic relationship with speaking: the mouth is likely to be open for a speech and closed for silence. Thus, it is not quite fully co-operative. However, it is a highly conventionalized relationship, and so the inferential path between *shut up* and “be quiet” is not that long, or, to use a better analogy, it has been widened through frequency of use from a path to a substantial road.

The point of the argument here is to suggest that the notion of directness has been too narrowly conceived, and that it would be better to consider it in terms of a number of continua that contribute to explicitness. We are not, unfortunately, out of the woods yet. Explicitness itself is a highly debated notion in pragmatics (e.g. Recanati 2004; Sperber and Wilson 1995).

## 6 Directness and Impoliteness

In Brown and Levinson’s framework (1987), the strategies are not only ordered according to directness but also associated with different degrees of face threat, such that Bald-on-record is selected when face threat is small and Don’t do the FTA is selected when face threat is large. In constructing my own models of impoliteness, I have never made any claims about correlations of this kind, instead I have pointed out that we simply lack the empirical evidence.

If we extrapolate from Brown and Levinson (1987), we could hypothesise that there is a positive linear relationship between gravity of offence and directness:

the more directly the impoliteness is triggered, the more offence is taken. However, there is an alternative hypothesis that appears in Leech (1983). Leech's (1983, p. 108) comments on the relationship between politeness and indirectness are frequently cited. Indirect utterances, such as "Could you possibly answer the phone", tend to be more polite, other things being equal, because they increase optionality for the hearer, whilst decreasing illocutionary force (cf. Leech 1983, p. 108). This is in tune with Brown and Levinson's (1987) hypothesis. Less well known is Leech's idea that indirectness can increase impoliteness:

in this case obliquity works in the opposite direction: because "You have something to declare" is an impolite belief, the more indirect kinds of question [e.g. "Haven't you something to declare?"] are progressively more impolite, more threatening, than the ordinary yes-no question. (Leech 1983, p. 171)

Let us consider example [2]. This took place in a courtroom on 7 May 2007, and was said by William P. Smith (the head of a bankruptcy department) to Judge Isicoff:

[2]

I suggest to you with respect, your honour, that you're a few French fries short of a Happy Meal in terms of what's likely to take place.  
(<http://www.law360.com/articles/27556/french-fry-remark-proves-costly-for-mcdermott-head>)

Judge Isicoff responded later by issuing a *sua sponte* Order to Show Cause as to why his license to practice should not be revoked, which cited the Model Rules of Professional Conduct of the American Bar Association and the court Guidelines for Courtroom Decorum. Smith had in fact used various conventional politeness devices: what he says is couched as a suggestion, and he purports to express deference through *with respect* and *your honour*. But this is not enough to overrule the offence of *you're a few French fries short of a Happy Meal*. This flouts the maxim of quality, implicating that judge is lacking a complete understanding. It is a creative metaphor (more so in 2007 than now). Note that the source domain—McDonald's products—is rather unflattering. One might object that the Smith was partly doing it "for laughs". However, similar implicit examples are not difficult to find. Example [3] was apparently a response made by the Republican presidential candidate John McCain to his wife when she teased him about his thinning hair in front of reporters:

[3]

At least I don't plaster on make-up like a trollop, you cunt.  
(*The Week* 12/07/08)

Unlike the previous example, here we see an accompanying conventional impolite insult, *you cunt*. The utterance *At least I don't plaster on make-up like a trollop* flouts the maxim of relation: the relevance is the implicature that she plasters on make-up like a trollop.

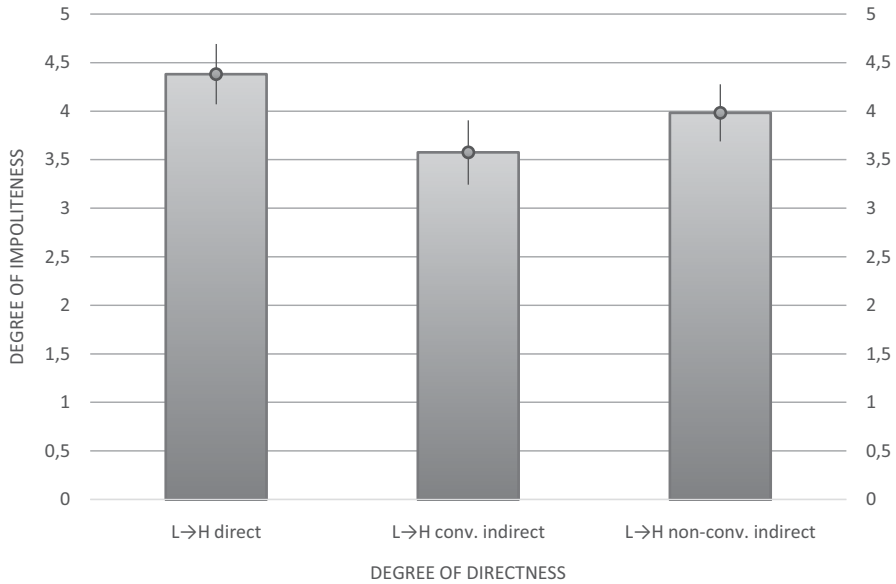
Of course, Leech would be the first to admit that this correlation between impoliteness and indirectness does not apply to all contexts, and that other factors, aside from indirectness, affect politeness/impoliteness. Most notably, observe that the quotation from Leech above refers to an "impolite belief" (cf. Leech 1983, pp. 109–110). Impolite beliefs involve competitive goals, "which are essentially

discourteous, such as getting someone to lend you money” (Leech 1983, p. 105; a footnote refers the reader to Brown and Levinson’s notion of FTAs). However, the basic idea remains: there is a hypothesis that there is a positive linear relationship between gravity of offence and directness—the more indirectly the impoliteness is triggered, the more offence is taken. Of course, this is the opposite of the hypothesis for Brown and Levinson. Which is right?

In Brown and Levinson’s (1987, pp. 71–74) line of thinking, indirectness or off-recordness is associated with tactfulness, non-coercion and the possible avoidance of accountability. Leech does not give an explanation as to why indirectness or implicitness might exacerbate impoliteness. One possibility is that it is due not just to the cost of extra processing but that one is forced to dwell on the impolite expression in order to work it out. Empirical work examining the impoliteness strategies and how they correlate with offence is generally lacking. However, there are two studies worth mentioning. Both have some methodological similarities: they use rating scales generated by the undergraduate informants themselves, and test particular utterances, representing different degrees of directness, in different scenarios. The test instruments are written. Here, I cannot describe the details of each study, but instead report the most pertinent findings for the issues aired in this section.

Culpeper (2011, Chap. 5) reported a study in which he examined the degree of impoliteness attributed to each of the three levels of directness, direct, conventionally indirect and nonconventionally indirect, realised in the pursuit of a command. The specific utterances given to 95 British undergraduates were: *you be quiet*, *could you be quiet*, and *you aren’t being quiet*. They were tested in three different situations, each of which was manipulated for markedly distinct power relations (either high to low or low to high). Figure 1 reports the results for the low- to high-power condition. This is the most relevant context, because an employee telling a boss, a defendant telling a judge or an army recruit telling a sergeant major to be quiet is likely to be construed as impolite. This then allows us to examine the issue of whether the impoliteness is made worse (more impolite) by directness or indirectness. (A 7-point scale was used for impoliteness; scores over 3.5 progressively indicate impoliteness).

In Fig. 1, the low score for conventional indirectness is notable. This is not what Brown and Levinson (1987) or what Leech (1983) predicted for differing degrees of directness. What do these results mean? One could say that it supports part of their claims: directness attracts higher evaluations of impoliteness, as does nonconventional indirectness, though to a lower degree. In fact, I had expected conventional indirectness to be the most impolite on the basis that it is the strong mismatch between the politeness of the conventionalized formula and the impoliteness of the situated act that exacerbates the overall impoliteness judgement. However, Dews et al. (1995) and Dews and Winner (1995, 1997) did not find that irony exacerbated judgements. Consistent with their “tinge hypothesis”, they found that utterances such as “what a lovely day for a picnic” were judged as less aggressive than their literal counterpart “what a lousy day for a picnic”; in other words, the positive literal meaning of the first utterance tinged the interpretation, leading to an impression of



**Fig. 1** Degree of impoliteness and degree of directness in low- to high-power condition

less aggressiveness (see Giora 2003, pp. 86–89, for additional empirical evidence). This may be the case for *could you be quiet*. Moreover, in this particular case, we should note that there is not such a strong mismatch between the conventionalized politeness and the context such that a polite interpretation is not sustainable. This is a key point. Instances of mismatches that are likely to exacerbate impoliteness tend to exaggerate the conventional politeness formula.

Viejobueno et al. (2008; this is largely based on Viejobueno 2005) is a study that deserves to be better known. Their study involved 55 native speakers of Spanish in Argentina of various professional backgrounds and 75 native speakers of English who were undergraduates in the USA. The study considered On-record/ Off-record; positive face/negative face; close relations/distant relations; and English speakers/ Spanish speakers. It revealed great similarity in the way the superstrategies were ranked across languages. The general rankings of the superstrategies with respect to degree of offence in both close and distant relations is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2** General ranking of impoliteness strategies according to offence (listed in decreasing order of offensiveness). (Adapted from Viejobueno 2008, p. 386)

<i>In close relations</i>	<i>In distant relations</i>
Positive face—On-record	Positive face—On-record
Positive face—Off-record	Negative face—Off-record
Negative face—On-record	Negative face—On-record
Negative face—Off-record	Positive face—Off-record

There are several interesting points to be made that are relevant to the discussion in this section. In close relations, On-record utterances are found to be more offensive than Off-record, regardless of type of face. This, then, is consistent with Brown and Levinson (1987). In distant relations, however, that ordering holds true for positive, but not negative face. For negative face, Off-record is more offensive than On-record. This, then, is consistent with Leech (1983). A further point of interest is that in distant relations Positive-face-On-record and Positive-face-Off-record are at opposite ends of the offensiveness scale. One might argue that in distant relation scenarios there is a greater tendency to give the producer the benefit of the doubt of their ambiguous utterances and assume politeness.

Clearly, what these studies tell us overall is that context is crucial in pushing interpretations of directness towards greater or lesser impoliteness.

## 7 A Note on the Problem of Context

Perhaps the key problem for taxonomies of strategies is how to deal with context. Simply saying that some linguistic form or pragmatic strategy has negative implications for face is fraught with difficulty, as Cupach and Metts (1994, p. 13) note:

to say that messages are aggravating or mitigating is misleading unless it is noted that such a statement is a shorthand way of saying that in certain situations certain messages are interpreted as aggravating or as mitigating.

Most taxonomies of face attack or impoliteness are careful to supply cautionary notes, such as: “[i]t must be stressed that this list is not exhaustive and that the strategies depend upon an appropriate context to be impolite” (Culpeper 1996, p. 357). But these are often overlooked. As I have stressed elsewhere, the most heinous crime when performing an analysis of impoliteness strategies, or politeness for that matter, is to simply count them up on the assumption that if the strategy is there, it necessarily is performing impoliteness. This assumption cannot be relied upon. Calling somebody names, for example, could be for the purpose of banter and thus a matter of cementing solidarity, not causing offence. This is not to say that these strategies cannot be used as a framework for quantitative analysis. But one must be sure to count both the appearance of the strategy *plus* an interpretation that it was taken as impolite in its context.

On the other hand, impoliteness strategies are not all equally sensitive to context. Whilst the impoliteness of some strategies can be neutralised or even made positive in many contexts, other impoliteness strategies are much more resistant, with neutralisation only being possible in a highly restricted number of contexts. The point I am making here is articulated in Tracy and Tracy (1998, p. 231), which makes a distinction between:

subtle, context-tied strategies and blatant, context-spanning strategies. Context-spanning strategies are ones likely to be seen as face-attacking in many different situations. Context-tied strategies are ones that in other conversational situations [...] could be neutral or even face enhancing.

By way of illustration, compare the output strategy “Make the other feel uncomfortable” achieved by, for example, maintaining silence, with the output strategy “Call the other names”, achieved by, for example, saying *you fucking cunt*. The former is highly likely to be much more sensitive to context than the latter. However, this example illustrates an additional issue. What matters is the precise means of realising the particular strategy. If the strategy “Call the other names” had been achieved by say, *you bastard*, that would have been much more sensitive to context. What we are discussing here is a consequence of the problem observed earlier that often the output strategy labels are for categories which encompass a variety of linguistic phenomena. I will pick this issue up in the following section.

## 8 A Bottom-Up Model of Impoliteness Triggers

There is an alternative way of approaching impoliteness strategies, and it is one that focuses much more on the idea that a strategy involves something that is routine, that is sociocultural knowledge within a particular community. The emphasis here is not on mapping out a logical means-ends framework of choices and then testing it against the data, but on analysing the data and letting the “strategies” emerge from it. We could still talk of strategies, in that we are still dealing with linguistic means which routinely achieve certain ends, specifically impoliteness effects. However, that term brings with it baggage, notably, the fact that it is not associated with bottom-up approaches. Consequently, I will use the term “trigger”.

And important set of triggers concerns conventionalized impoliteness formulae. Like Terkourafi (e.g. 2001) in her discussion of politeness, my point of entry for the identification of conventionalized impoliteness formulae is not framed by the notion of “strategy” or associated with uncertain dimensions, such as directness, along which strategies are purported to vary. Not only are these difficult to define but also they are also fraught with methodological problems (they tend to rely on intuition). I understand conventionalization here in the same way as Terkourafi (e.g. 2002, 2003), namely, items conventionalized for a particular context of use. They involve generalised implicatures in minimal contexts (cf. Levinson 1995). There is overlap here with Gumperz’s (1982) notion of “contextualization cue”. Note here that there is absolutely no claim that such items have completely stable impolite meanings, that they are impolite in all contexts of use.

How does one identify such items? For politeness items to count as polite, they must go unchallenged (e.g. Terkourafi 2005a; Haugh 2007). Thus, for impoliteness items to count as impolite, they must go challenged. Evidence of challenges includes, notably, counter impoliteness (tit-for-tat pairings), but also meta-pragmatic comments (e.g. “that was so rude”), indications, verbal or non-verbal, of offence being experienced (i.e. symptoms of emotions such as humiliation, hurt or anger). Such actions are part of what constructs impoliteness contexts. How does one know that the formulae might be conventional? One type of evidence is the regularity of use in a particular context. In my work, notably Culpeper (2011), I generated candi-



dates for consideration from copious qualitative analyses, and then manually verified their robustness in the two-billion word *Oxford English Corpus*, operating the criterion that at least 50% of the cases had to be accompanied by evidence of impoliteness for it to count as a conventionalized impoliteness formula. The resulting list of impoliteness formulae is as follows (all examples are taken from the data; square brackets are designed to give an indication of some of the structural characteristics of the formulae; alternatives are indicated with slashes):

## INSULTS

1. Personalized negative vocatives
  - [you] [fucking/rotten/dirty/fat/little/etc.][moron/fuck/plonker/dickhead/berk/pig/shit/bastard/loser/liar/minx/brat/slut/squirt/sod/bugger etc.] [you]
2. Personalized negative assertions
  - [you] [are] [so/such a] [shit/stink/thick/stupid/bitchy/bitch/hypocrite/disappointment/gay/nuts/nuttier than a fruit cake/hopeless/pathetic/fussy/terrible/fat/ugly/etc.]
  - [you] [can't do] [anything right/basic arithmetic/etc.]
  - [you] [disgust me]/ [make me] [sick/etc.]
3. Personalized negative references
  - [your] [stinking/little] [mouth/act/arse/body/corpse/hands/guts/trap/breath/etc.]
4. Personalized third-person negative references (in the hearing of the target)
  - [the] [daft] [bimbo]
  - [she] ['s] [nutzo]

## POINTED CRITICISMS/COMPLAINTS

- [that/this/it] [is/was] [absolutely/extraordinarily/unspeakably/etc.][bad/rubbish/crap/horrible/terrible/etc.]

## UNPALATABLE QUESTIONS AND/OR PRESUPPOSITIONS

- why do you make my life impossible?
- which lie are you telling me?
- what's gone wrong now?
- you want to argue with me or you want to go to jail?

## CONDESCENSIONS (see also the use of "little" in Insults)

- [that] ['s/ is being] [babyish/childish/etc.]

## MESSAGE ENFORCERS

- listen here (preface)
- you got [it/that]? (tag)
- do you understand [me]? (tag)

## DISMISSALS

- [go] [away]
- [get] [lost/out]
- [fuck/piss/shove] [off]

## SILENCERS

- [shut] [it]/ [your] [stinking/fucking/etc.] [mouth/face/trap/etc.]
- shut [the fuck] up

## THREATS

- [I'll/I'm/we're] [gonna] [smash your face in/beat the shit out of you/box your ears/bust your fucking head off/straighten you out/etc.] [if you don't] [X]
- [you'd better be ready Friday the 20th to meet with me/do it] [or] [else] [I'll] [X]
- [X] [before I] [hit you/strangle you]

## NEGATIVE EXPRESSIVES (E.G. CURSES, ILL-WISHES)

- [go] [to hell/hang yourself/fuck yourself]
- [damn/fuck] [you]

(Culpeper 2011, pp. 135–136)

Interestingly, note that the first three categories above would fit Positive impoliteness, whilst the remainder would fit Negative impoliteness. The first category, insults, is by far the most numerous.

Of course, not all impoliteness events involve conventionalized impoliteness formulae. In the diary report data discussed in Culpeper (2011), 59 of my 100 reported impoliteness events did not involve conventional impoliteness formulae. Instead, informants interpreted what was said (or done) or not said (or done) in a particular context as impolite, despite the fact that what was said (or done) was not “preloaded” for impoliteness. I refer to this kind of impoliteness as “implicational impoliteness”, and define it as “an impoliteness understanding that does not match the surface form or semantics of the utterance or the symbolic meaning of the behaviour” (2011, p. 17).

In Chap. 5 of Culpeper (2011), I proposed a model of triggers for implicational impoliteness. The notion of a mismatch is important here. Each category of triggers mismatches something in a different way. I summarise, slightly adapt and illustrate this model briefly below:

**CONVENTION DRIVEN**

**INTERNAL:** The context projected by part of a behaviour mismatches that projected by another part. Examples can be synchronic or diachronic. Synchronic examples typically rely on multimodal mismatches, such as declaring somebody’s work to be interesting, but doing so with the prosody of boredom (slow tempo, restricted pitch movement, etc.). Diachronic examples typically rely on mismatches between conventionalized politeness formulae and conventionalized impoliteness formulae. An example that occurred in my army recruit data is *you really impress people with your little act, girl*, said to an army recruit by a sergeant major. Here, *you really impress* sounds like a conventionalized politeness complement formula. In contrast, *little act* is conventionalized impoliteness condescension, and *girl* (said to an adult female) is a possible conventionalized impoliteness vocative insult.

EXTERNAL: The context projected by a behaviour mismatches the context of use.

I have collected three examples of electronic correspondence sent to the Lancaster University staff mail list complaining about somebody backing into their cars without leaving any contact details. Each letter concluded with some kind of “thanks”, which, for example, in one was: *Thank you SO VERY MUCH*. Clearly, this conventionalized politeness formulae, coupled with intensification, clashes with the context of the complaint letter.

Everyday labels for phenomena that are described in the two subcategories above include “sarcasm”, “teasing” and labels for some types of humour such as “harsh/bitter jokes/humour”. We might note that this category also overlaps with my earlier category of Sarcasm, as defined in Section 3.

### FORM DRIVEN

The surface form or semantic content of a behaviour is marked, and this triggers an impolite inference. Examples include those which can be described via Grice’s (1975) cooperative principle, such as example [3]. It also includes mimicry, which can be described as a special case of echoic irony (Sperber and Wilson 1995). Everyday labels for phenomena that overlap with what is being described here include “insinuation”, “innuendo”, “casting dispersions”, “digs”, “snide remarks”, “mimicry”, and so on. We might note that this category overlaps with my earlier category of Off-record impoliteness, as defined in Section 3.

### CONTEXT DRIVEN

UNMARKED BEHAVIOUR: An unmarked and unconventionalized behaviour mismatches the context. This category overlaps with what in Section 3 I had described as Bald-on-record impoliteness. It is, as remarked there, rare, but examples do occur. Consider example [4], reported by an undergraduate student:

[4]

Mum—Have you sorted your finance

Vikki—Yea kind of

Mum—Vikki, you need to do it, you are going to be in trouble. Go tomorrow and go to student finance

Vikki—Mum stop going on I know

Mum—Stop leaving things till the last minute

Vikki—Right I’m going your doing my head in. Love you.

In her report, the informant describes her mother’s behaviour as “irritating and annoying”. Her mother’s three turns are all Bald-on-record: there is a bald yes–no question about the delicate area of finance; an attention getter (“Vikki”) followed by a bald assertion of need, a warning of negative consequences and two imperative requests; and finally a further imperative request (which also contains the change-of-state verb “stop”, thus presupposing that she always is *leaving things till the last minute*). This behaviour is not untypical of parent–child talk. It is generally legitimated, and thus is less likely to be seen as impolite. However, the problem here is that the power differential is no longer straightforwardly accepted, as the informant comments: “[s]he is very protective but needs to remember I am 20. I

am old enough to take responsibility and consequences of my actions". Thus, the mother is perceived to violate what is socially acceptable, and it is this that makes it impolite.

ABSENCE OF BEHAVIOUR: The absence of a behaviour mismatches the context. This category, of course, overlaps with what I had described in Section 3 as withhold politeness. An example might be failure to thank someone for a gift.

Figure 2 collates the aspects of the impoliteness model mentioned thus far in this section. Of course, one could pick holes with most of the labels used, and I do not doubt that the definitions could do with further tuning on the basis of further analysis. To clarify the labels behind one important distinction, the fact that "implicational" appears to contrast with "conventionalized formulae" should not be taken to mean that "conventionalized formulae" are in no sense implicational. As briefly hinted above, the background to this distinction lies in Grice's (1989) distinction between particularised and generalised implicatures, and its elaboration by Levinson (e.g. 1995) and, for politeness, Terkourafi (e.g. 2005b). Particularised implicatures are worked out from scratch on the basis of the particular context the utterance appears in; generalised implicatures have a more stable association with particular linguistic forms (cf. Grice 1989, p. 37). Levinson's particular contribution was to characterise generalised implicatures as a level of meaning between particularised implicatures and fully conventionalized (non-defeasible) implicatures (1979, p. 216). Terkourafi's (2005b) contribution was to split generalised implicatures into two, a division based on the relationship with context. The first captures situations where the implicature is weakly context-dependent, requiring a minimal amount of contextual information relating to the social context of use in which the utterance was routinised and thus conventionalized to some degree; the second, as described by Levinson, captures situations where the implicature is even more weakly context-dependent—its meaning is presumed in a variety of contexts. Terkourafi's description of politeness inferencing also applies to impoliteness. Her argument is neatly summarised here (Terkourafi 2005a, p. 251, original emphasis):

Politeness is achieved on the basis of a generalised implicature when an expression *x* is uttered in a context with which—based on the addressee's previous experience of similar contexts—expression *x* regularly co-occurs. In this case, rather than engaging in full-blown inferencing about the speaker's intention, the addressee draws on that previous experience (represented holistically as a frame) to derive the proposition that "in offering an expression *x* the speaker is being polite" as a generalised implicature of the speaker's utterance. On the basis of this generalised implicature, the addressee may then come to hold the further belief that the speaker *is* polite.

So, the category "conventionalized (impoliteness) formulae" involves a generalized implicature flowing from the perceiver's experiences of similar contexts, whereas "implicational (impoliteness)" involves full-blown particularized inferencing. One might also note here that the idea of context-dependent versus context-spanning strategies, as discussed in Section 7, fits the ideas here.

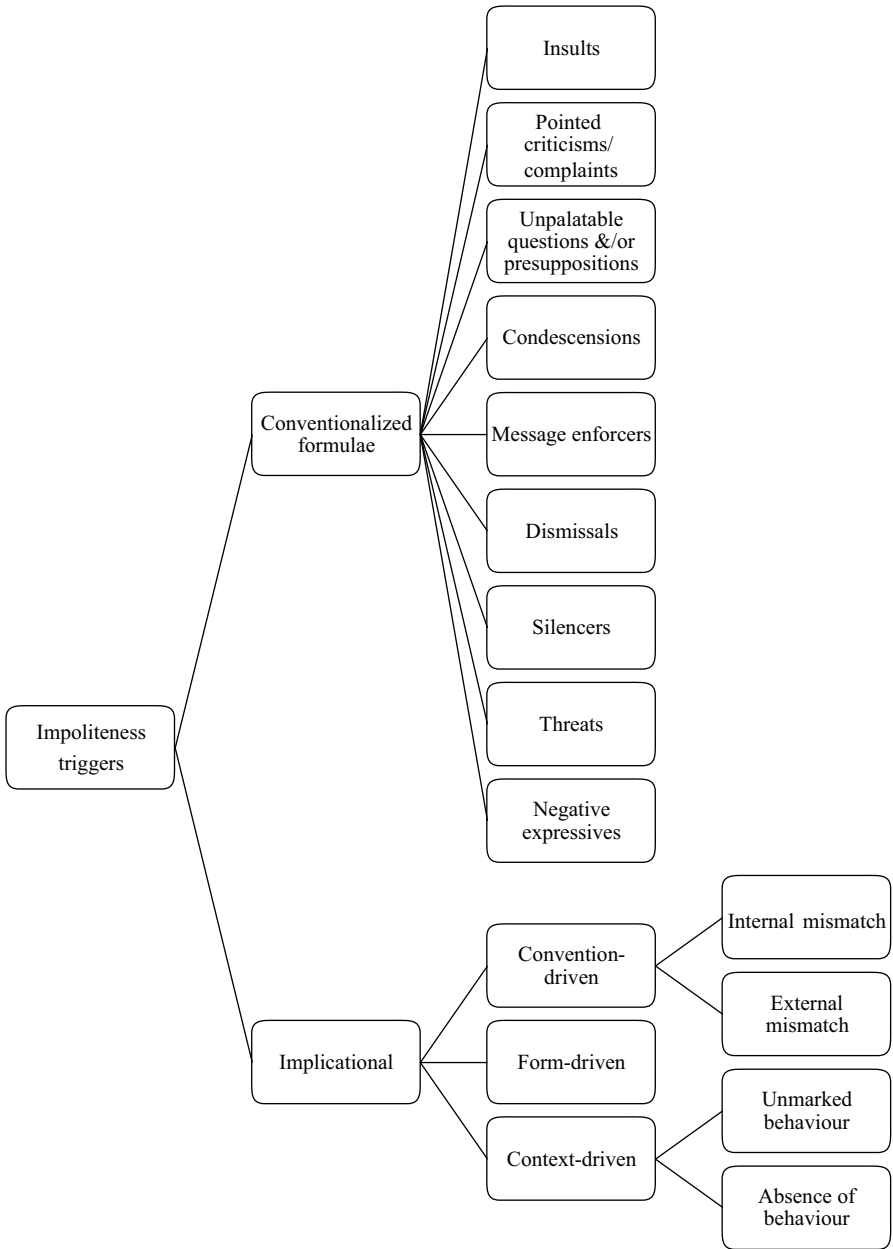


Fig. 2 A bottom-up model of impoliteness triggers

## 9 Conclusion

This chapter has probed the notion of a strategy, and in particular how it has been utilised in the context of studies of impoliteness. One important aspect of this chapter has been to highlight the fact that neither Brown and Levinson (1987) nor the early impoliteness frameworks following in its footsteps lived up to the early vision of strategy as at least partly to do with the routine. This is not to decry an approach based on logical mapping of choices of linguistic means to achieve certain ends, and then testing that mapping against the data. However, in itself, it is insufficient, if we take sufficiency to be the achievement of an account that is grounded in data, sufficiently nuanced to account for data, and can be applied to the analysis of data without confounding ambiguities. I pointed out that impoliteness output strategies seem to be relatively robust, having been applied successfully to various datasets. Moreover, they are not merely “choices” mapped out by the analyst. The fact that they are discussed in impoliteness or rudeness manuals reflects the fact that they are shared sociocultural knowledge. In this, one can claim that they reflect the kind of discourse strategy that Gumperz (1982) had in mind. Superstrategies, however, are another matter. They have been the site of much debate, notably with respect to the notions of positive and negative faces, directness and context.

On the issue of positive and negative faces, much depends on how the researcher orients to those categories. If handled critically, they can be deployed as useful analytical categories, exposing behavioural patterns, as indeed Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2010, p. 544) argues. My own preference, like that of some other researchers, is to add a degree of complexity to those categories. Regarding directness, classic approaches have been somewhat limited with respect to their understanding of directness, probably as a consequence of the influence of Searle’s speech act theory. Minimally, we would need to take on board the relationship with the syntax, the explicitness of reference to the target, and the transparency of the semantics. Even then, things were not be straightforward, but at least it would be a step in the right direction. Empirical work is certainly an avenue that may help us probe exactly what it is that comprises “directness” or explicitness. But such work is rather thin on the ground. Regarding the relationship with offence, there seems to be evidence that either directness or indirectness can exacerbate defensiveness, depending on the context. And finally, with respect to context, the classic politeness models did map out the usage of particular strategies in particular social contexts. However, the notion of strategy they deployed is devoid of context. As noted above, the aim was mapping out logical linguistic choices for achieving certain ends. It was not to consider the contexts in which certain ends were realised by particular linguistic means.

In the final section of this chapter, I mapped out an alternative approach, one that is empirically based. Moreover, like Terkourafi (e.g. 2001), it is not based on uncertain dimension like directness, but on the regularities of linguistic behaviours in particular social contexts. This is reflected, not least of all, in the way that conventionalization is defined: it involves particular occasions of use. The lists of triggers are restricted to groups of items that arose from my data; they do not purport to be lists of all possible strategies or formula. Note, for example, that this is restricted to

English data. However, they do have the merit that the items that form all groups are brought into consideration because participants judged them as impolite, rather than me the researcher. This is an important point of departure from previous work. It is one way in which they achieve validity. It also is a way of solving the practical problem that classic approaches to strategies have, namely, that they cannot list all linguistic means, yet do not have a mechanism for discriminating amongst them.

One might observe that the model outlined in the final section overlaps quite significantly with the model of impoliteness outlined in Section 3. This is not entirely surprising. As I mentioned earlier, it is not as if Brown and Levinson (1987) devised their model without any regard to the data. Moreover, it is certainly not my intention to rubbish Brown and Levinson (1987) and related models, not least because Brown and Levinson (1987) works up to a point. However, there are fundamental differences in approach, as noted in the previous paragraph. Furthermore, there are significant differences in the resultant categories. Note how context lurks in the categories of the model I proposed: it is factored into the definition of conventionalization (following Terkourafi e.g. 2005b), and also the very notion of mismatching relies on co-text or context. Of course, any formula or strategy is not an island unto itself, but contextualises and is contextualised in impoliteness events. This ultimately determines its meanings and functions.

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# Reconstructing Argumentative Discourse with the Help of Speech Act Conditions

Frans H. van Eemeren and Bart Garssen

**Abstract** According to the pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation, for analysing argumentative discourse, a normative reconstruction is required which encompasses four kinds of transformations. It is explained in this chapter how speech act conditions can play a part in carrying out such a reconstruction. It is argued that integrating Searlean insights concerning speech acts with Gricean insights concerning conversational maxims can provide us with the necessary tools. For this, the standard theory of speech acts has to be amended in several respects and the conversational maxims have to be translated into speech act conditions. Making use of the rules of communication thus arrived at, and starting from the distribution of speech acts in a critical discussion as specified in the pragma-dialectical model, it is then demonstrated how indirect speech acts are to be transformed when reconstructing argumentative discourse. Finally, contextual clues for reconstruction found in argumentative activity types are discussed.

**Keywords** Argumentation · Argumentative activity type · Argumentative discourse · Conversational maxim · Critical discussion · Indirect speech act · Normative reconstruction · Pragma dialectical approach · Rules of communication · Speech act conditions

## 1 A Pragma-Dialectical Approach to Argumentative Discourse

In order to be able to develop adequate tools for analysing argumentative discourse, a consistent and coherent research programme is needed which encompasses five components. In the pragma-dialectical argumentation theory, an approach to the

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This chapter is based on van Eemeren and Grootendorst (Argumentation 3(4):367–383, 1989).

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analysis of argumentation is proposed in which these five components are incorporated. In the present chapter, we shall explain this approach with regard to the reconstruction of argumentative discourse.

In answering the crucial question as to when it is reasonable to regard an argumentation as acceptable, in the first, philosophical component of the research programme, we take a *critical-rationalist* stance. In the second, theoretical component in moulding this philosophical concept of reasonableness into a particular model, we commit ourselves to a *pragma-dialectical* theory of argumentation. In the third, reconstructive component, we try to get a better grasp of argumentative discourse by opting for a *resolution-oriented* reconstruction. By systematically exploring the various forms of argumentative reality, in the fourth, empirical component, we aim for a *convincingness-centred* description of argumentative discourse which clarifies to what extent our resolution-oriented reconstruction is empirically supported. In the fifth, practical component, we try to integrate the various findings of the previous components in a *reflection-minded practice* which improves argumentative discourse in various contexts and settings.<sup>1</sup>

Since the idea of having a regulated critical discussion is considered as the basic principle of reasonableness in our philosophy of argumentation, the formulation of instrumental discussion rules is required.<sup>2</sup> The dialectical aspect of these rules consists in there being two parties which attempt to resolve a difference of opinion in a discussion by means of a methodical exchange of moves, whereas the pragmatic aspect is represented by the description of these moves as speech acts. Putting forward an argument is the most crucial of these moves. However, defining argumentation, just like that, as a speech act, creates in at least three respects a clash with Searle's standard theory.

First, unlike in such speech acts as asserting, requesting, and promising, in argumentation more than one proposition is always involved. Sometimes it looks as if there is only one proposition, but on closer inspection it turns out that in such cases one or more other propositions—which are genuine parts of the argumentation—have been left unstated.<sup>3</sup>

Second, unlike Searle's prototypes, the utterance of an argumentation, as a speech act, always has a dual illocutionary or—as we prefer to call it—*communicative* force: besides functioning as argumentation, it is also an assertion, a question, a form of advice, a proposal, or whatever.

Third, unlike most of the speech acts discussed by Searle, argumentation cannot stand by itself, but is always in a particular way linked to another speech act. This other speech act expresses a standpoint. If this specific relation is absent, referring to the speech act as argumentation is not justified.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1987).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1988).

<sup>3</sup> The unstated parts of an argumentation can be referred to as “unexpressed premises”. Cf. van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984), pp. 119–149.

<sup>4</sup> Of course, there can be other candidates: explanation, amplification, elucidation, but not argumentation.

In order to solve the problems caused by these three differences, the standard theory of speech acts needs to be modified in such a way that it also becomes applicable to units larger than single speech acts. This can be achieved by making a distinction between communicative forces at the sentence level on the one hand and communicative forces at some “higher” textual level on the other.<sup>5</sup> It is only at the textual level that the utterance of a speech act can have the communicative force of argumentation. The difference between speech acts at the sentence level and at the textual level can be expressed by referring to *elementary* speech acts in the former case and to *complex* speech acts in the latter.<sup>6</sup>

The complex speech act of argumentation is aimed at convincing another person of the acceptability of a standpoint. But what is meant by that? One possible interpretation would be: attempting to evoke in that person the “feeling” of being convinced. However, perceiving being convinced as an internal mental state threatens the externalization which is aimed for in our approach. This can be avoided by externalizing *convinced* as being prepared to express acceptance of the standpoint defended by the argumentation. Acceptance can be part of controllable and rule-governed behaviour, which is not the case with being convinced in the internal sense.

Treating the acceptance of a standpoint by another person in this way means that expressing acceptance can be seen as a perlocutionary or—as we prefer to call it—*interactional* effect of the complex speech act of argumentation. In the standard theory of speech acts, interactional effects constitute a category both diffuse and diverse: All kinds of possible consequences of speech acts fall under the general heading of perlocutions (opening a window in response to a complaint, quitting smoking three years after having been told about the dangers of smoking, getting frightened as a result of the loudness of a remark, etc.).<sup>7</sup> In our opinion, it is necessary to make a distinction between the different kinds of effects upon the listener (or reader) which can be brought about by speech acts. With regard to the acceptance of argumentation, one should concentrate on the interactional acceptance effects intended by the speaker (1), which require recognition of the complex speech act as argumentation (2), and which depend on rational considerations by the listener (3). Undoubtedly, many other consequences can also occur subsequently, but these are beyond our scope.

These observations confirm that it is necessary to modify the standard theory of speech acts in several respects. In the standard theory, both *identity* (or *recognizability*) conditions and *correctness* conditions are formulated, but they are not clearly distinguished as such. Furthermore, it is also necessary to differentiate between the correctness of a speech act from the *speaker's* (or *writer's*) point of view and its correctness from the *listener's* (or *reader's*) point of view. Seen from the first

<sup>5</sup> Cf. van Eemeren and Grootendorst, where related views are also discussed (1984, pp. 33–39).

<sup>6</sup> For practical purposes, we do not go into the exact relationship between sentences and propositions now. We just equate speech acts consisting of the expression of one proposition with one-sentence speech acts.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Searle's description of perlocutionary acts (1970, p. 25).

perspective, for example, it is sufficient that speakers who make a proposal believe that their proposition is in the interest of the listener, but seen from the second perspective, for a “happy” proposal, it is also required that the listeners think likewise. Only if this is actually the case can the proposal be a correct one to them. So, the conditions for correctness have to be formulated from both a speaker’s perspective and a listener’s perspective (and the same applies, by the way, to the identity conditions).

## 2 Distribution of Speech Acts in a Critical Discussion

In order to be able to resolve a difference of opinion by means of argumentation, the language users involved must observe certain rules. As far as their contributions are in accordance with such rules for a reasonable discussion, the discourse can be referred to as a *critical discussion*.

A critical discussion passes through four stages: the “confrontation”, “opening”, “argumentation”, and “concluding” stage.

In the *confrontation* stage, the difference of opinion is externalized: It becomes clear that there is a standpoint which gives rise to doubt or contradiction so that a difference of opinion arises.<sup>8</sup>

In the *opening* stage, the participants agree on the manner in which the discussion is to be conducted: They have to determine whether there is sufficient common ground to serve as a starting point. Only if there is such a shared point of departure does it make sense to undertake an attempt to eliminate differences of opinion by means of argumentation.

In the *argumentation* stage—as is obvious from the term—argumentation is advanced and reacted to. By definition, the purpose of putting forward arguments is to overcome possible doubts with respect to the standpoint. And by reacting to the arguments, it can be made clear that this attempt has not yet succeeded in a fully satisfactory way.

Finally, in the *concluding* stage, the result of the discussion is established. It is only if both parties agree on this that the difference of opinion can really be regarded as having been resolved.

In *Speech Acts in Argumentative Discussions*, van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984) developed a model that explains which rules apply to the distribution of the speech acts in the various stages in the resolution of a difference of opinion. As an ideal model, it reproduces only the aspects which are relevant for this. It provides a set of tools for analysing argumentative discourse and makes it possible to determine to what extent practice corresponds to the ideal. In this respect, the model not only links theory to practice but also combines normative and descriptive aspects.

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<sup>8</sup> In practice, the difference of opinion can be expressed explicitly, but may also remain implicit, in which case the discussion or discursive text is based on the anticipation of a possible difference of opinion.

The rules of the model specify what types of speech acts the participants in a critical discussion have to perform at the four stages in order to contribute to resolving the difference of opinion. The rules prescribe at what stage of the discussion the discussants are entitled, or indeed obliged, to perform a particular speech act.<sup>9</sup>

Starting from Searle's taxonomy of speech acts,<sup>10</sup> it can be said that all kinds of *assertives* can be used to express standpoints and argumentation, and to establish the results of the discussion. The use of *directives* is restricted to challenging somebody to defend his standpoint and requesting them to put forward argumentation in support of it. *Commissives* are used to accept (or not accept) a standpoint or argumentation and to agree upon the division of dialectical roles in the discussion and upon the discussion rules. Finally, *language usage declaratives* such as defining, precizing, amplifying, and explicitizing, can be helpful in avoiding a variety of misunderstandings. It should be noted that expressives and other types of declaratives are not listed in the model, because they do not contribute directly to the resolution of a difference of opinion.<sup>11</sup>

### 3 Integration of Searlean and Gricean Insights

The descriptive conditions for performing elementary and complex speech acts in argumentative discourse are closely connected with all kinds of general rules which govern everyday conversation, such as Grice's maxims, and the rules for turn-taking described by conversation-analysts.<sup>12</sup> Our normative rules for critical discussions can be seen as dialectical regulations of the rules that already apply in ordinary discourse.<sup>13</sup> In order to relate the normative rules for the performance of speech acts in a critical discussion with the general rules which govern ordinary discourse,

<sup>9</sup> The rules are introduced and discussed in van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984), pp. 51–175. A simplified non-technical version, specially adapted to the analysis of fallacies, is presented in van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1987) and (1992).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Searle (1979), pp. 1–29.

<sup>11</sup> The distribution of the various types of speech acts in the stages of a critical discussion is discussed in van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984), pp. 95–118. Here, they also introduce the notion of language usage declaratives (1984, pp. 109–110).

<sup>12</sup> The conversational maxims are introduced in Grice (1975), the rules for turn taking are discussed in Levinson (1983) and Edmondson (1981).

<sup>13</sup> Of course this is a simplification, but it draws attention to the fact that proposing normative rules for critical discussion has more ties with reality than some people think. To give an example, one could refer to the similarities between the starting point in the ideal model that the participants in a critical discussion are striving for the resolution of a difference of opinion on the one hand, and the commonly accepted conversational fact that in ordinary conversation there is a preference for agreement among the interlocutors. As empirical research reported in van Eemeren et al. (2009) makes clear, the norms for reasonableness that are expressed in the rules for critical discussion are in fact to a large extent in agreement with those of ordinary arguers.

the speech act conditions must be formulated in a way that reveals the similarities between these conditions and conversational rules, say, Grice's maxims.<sup>14</sup>

In order to be able to integrate these two, we first redefine the Gricean co-operative principle as the more general and succinctly phrased *principle of communication*: that language users be *clear, honest, efficient, and to the point*. This *principle of communication* summarizes the general rules which speakers and writers observe and which listeners and readers expect them to observe when communicating.<sup>15</sup>

Starting from the principle of communication we describe, as an alternative to the Gricean maxims of Manner, Quality, Quantity, and Relation, the general rules which govern communication as follows:

1. Perform no *incomprehensible* speech acts.
2. Perform no *insincere* speech acts.
3. Perform no *unnecessary* speech acts.
4. Perform no *pointless* speech acts.
5. Perform no new speech acts that are *not an appropriate sequel or reaction* to preceding speech acts.

The *first* rule implements the communication requirement "Be clear". It corresponds to the identity conditions for the performance of speech acts: the propositional content condition and the essential condition.

In order to be clear, speakers (or writers) must formulate the speech acts they wish to perform in such a way that the listeners (or readers) are able to recognize their communicative force and to establish what propositions are expressed. This does not mean that they must be perfectly explicit, but it does mean that it is not allowed to make it impossible, or almost impossible, for the recipient to arrive at a correct interpretation.

The *second* rule implements the communication requirement "Be honest". It corresponds to a part of the conditions for correctness in the performance of the speech act: the responsibility conditions. It might be useful to note here that van Eemeren and Grootendorst renamed Searle's "sincerity conditions" *responsibility conditions* in order to achieve the externalization they aimed for, and to clarify what kind of commitments a speaker undertakes by performing a certain speech act, irrespective of the mental state he or she is in.

The implication of the honesty requirement is that the speaker may be held responsible for having undertaken the commitments which are associated with the speech act concerned. If speakers perform a directive ("Close the window"), they

<sup>14</sup> Cf. van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992).

<sup>15</sup> In practice, of course, it is not at all uncommon for one of the rules of communication to be broken, but this does not necessarily mean that in such a case the Principle of Communication has been abandoned altogether. If this *is* the case, however, then the person doing so is reneging on a basic convention to which all the members of the community to which he belongs subscribe, and he or she thereby interferes with the communication. Assuming that it is not clear that a speaker is not in full control of his or her actions (he or she may be drunk for example), or cannot be held responsible for them, the speaker will have to account for this action or be faced with sanctions which may vary from an irritated reaction to a complete breaking off of the contact.

may be held responsible for wanting the listener to perform the action referred to in the directive, if they perform an assertive (“It is raining”), for believing that the proposition expressed is true, and so on.

The *third* and the *fourth* rules implement the communication requirement “Be efficient”. They correspond to another part of the conditions for correctness in the performance of the speech act: the preparatory conditions. The implication of the efficiency requirement is that a correct performance of the speech act must neither be unnecessary nor pointless. For example, the performance of the complex speech act of argumentation is unnecessary if the speaker assumes that the listener is already convinced of the standpoint being defended (the first preparatory condition). And the performance is pointless if the speaker assumes in advance that the argumentation will under no circumstances lead the listener to an acceptance of the standpoint at issue (the second and third preparatory conditions).

The *fifth* rule implements the communication requirement “Keep to the point”. It does not correspond to any speech act condition nor does it refer to the performance of an individual speech act, whether elementary or complex; instead, it is concerned with the relation between different speech acts. The question here is whether, in the verbal and non-verbal context at hand, the performance of a particular speech act is a relevant addition to the speech acts already performed.

Thus, the relevance requirement “Keep to the point” relates to the sequence of speech acts and the function of a speech act in a particular speech event. As regards sequences of speech acts, it is possible that the communicative roles of speaker and listener do not change so that the language user who performs one speech act will also perform the next. But it is also possible that these roles *do* change, so that the language user who is the speaker for one speech act is the listener for the next. If the communicative roles remain the same, the next speech act is a sequel to its predecessor; if they change, it is a reaction to it.

To fulfil the requirement “Keep to the point”, a sequel to a speech act, or a reaction to a speech act, must be appropriate. Precisely what comprises an appropriate sequel or an appropriate reaction is difficult to define in general terms. However, it is possible to explain what this amounts to. Every speech act seeks to achieve the communicative effect that the listener understands it, and the interactional effect that the listener accepts it. So, the performance of a speech act expressing the fact that another speech act has been understood or accepted will be a relevant reaction. The same applies, of course, to the expression of non-understanding or non-acceptance. Giving reasons as to why something is, or is not, accepted is also relevant. Of course, an appropriate reaction is not necessarily a fitting reaction, let alone the reaction that most closely meets the speaker’s wishes or expectations.

It is more difficult to tell what comprises an appropriate sequel to a speech act of one’s own. Here, we must draw on information about the verbal and non-verbal contexts of the speech act. In some contexts, the normal pattern of speech acts is fairly rigid, making it reasonably obvious what options are open. As has been shown by conversation analysts, giving reasons for a standpoint is considered to be a perfectly normal “repair” of an offence, whether real or anticipated, to the “preference for agreement” governing ordinary discourse. In the case of argumentative



discourse, the pragma-dialectical ideal model of a critical discussion can be a useful starting point for determining what is and what is not an appropriate sequel.

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst's rules of communication correspond to a large extent to Grice's maxims, but the maxims are now formulated as rules for the performance of speech acts. Their first rule corresponds roughly to Searle's propositional content condition and the essential condition. Their second rule corresponds to his sincerity condition, their third and fourth rules correspond to his preparatory condition, whereas their fifth rule does not have a counterpart in his conditions.

The integration of Gricean maxims with Searlean speech act conditions has some important advantages. Compared to the maxims, these rules are on the one hand more specific as a consequence of their connection with the Searlean conditions; on the other hand they are more general because they are no longer restricted to assertions, as they are for Grice. Furthermore, it has now been shown that the conditions for different speech acts are in fact specifications of more general rules of communication.

The pragma-dialectical synthesis of Searlean and Gricean insights also reveals the heterogeneous character of the original speech act conditions. Searle does not differentiate between their importance, but as we have said before, in our revised version of their theory, van Eemeren and Grootendorst thought it necessary to make a distinction between the propositional content and essential conditions on the one hand, and the sincerity and preparatory conditions on the other. The need for this can be demonstrated by looking at the consequences of a violation of the various conditions. In the case of violation of the first two conditions, no recognizable speech act has been performed, whereas in the case of violation of the second two conditions, though the performance of the speech act is not quite successful, or "happy" in the full sense, a recognizable speech act *is* performed.

This crucial difference can be accounted for by realizing that there is a correspondence between the propositional content condition and the essential condition on the one hand, and Grice's maxim of Manner ("Be perspicuous") and our first rule of communication ("Perform no incomprehensible speech acts") on the other. Violating these two conditions damages the recognizability of a speech act, whereas violating one of the two others affects its correctness because of insincerity, inefficiency, or irrelevance. In order to express this difference terminologically, we refer to the first two as *identity conditions*, and to the second two as *correctness conditions*.<sup>16</sup>

## 4 Normative Reconstruction of Conversational Argument

By integrating Searlean and Gricean insights into the rules of communication, we think an important step has been made towards a comprehensive theory of everyday communication and interaction. These rules can be of use in the analysis of

<sup>16</sup> Cf. van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984), p. 41.

argumentative discourse which requires a normative reconstruction of this discourse. What do we mean by such a normative reconstruction of conversational argument?

In a normative reconstruction, a calculated merger of the normative and the descriptive is aimed for, which offers us a chance of sensibly joining together the philosophical “ideal” with the practical “real”. The reconstruction should reflect both the peculiarities of the reality from which it started and those of the ideal model which served as a framework for analysis.

Linguistic expressions can, as we all know, serve more than one goal at the same time. The argumentative function will not always be the main one. Therefore, it is first necessary to establish to what extent the “speech event” as it unfolds in practice, is—wholly or partly—argumentative. Carrying out such an analysis makes sense only with respect to (parts of) discourse which can indeed be considered argumentative. Moreover, some (parts of) discourses will be closer to the ideal than others. Depending on the discourse at stake, the reconstruction which is required in the analysis can be more or less radical.

A normative reconstruction has great advantages in terms of surveyability and discernment, especially in more complex discourse. If the reconstruction takes place within the theoretical framework of an ideal model in which all relevant aspects of a critical discussion are incorporated, then it will serve to make the things we are looking for more clearly visible in the analysis. The ideal model must explain which operations are required, what they entail, and when and why they must be carried out.<sup>17</sup>

Our pragma-dialectical ideal model serves as a heuristic tool for a systematic resolution-oriented reconstruction of the various relevant speech acts and stages in an argumentative discourse.<sup>18</sup> A resolution-oriented reconstruction is asked for because, first and foremost, we would like to know which elements in the discourse play a part in the process of resolving the difference of opinion concerned. This means that in our analysis, we must try to detect the resolution-relevant speech acts and stages in the discourse and reconstruct their exact role in a critical discussion.<sup>19</sup>

A dialectical analysis of an argumentative discourse provides us with an analytical survey of:

<sup>17</sup> We call these operations *dialectical transformations*. Cf. van Eemeren (1986), (1987) and van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992). An approach which is in several respects akin to ours is developed in the many interesting articles of Jackson and Jacobs (e.g. 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983).

<sup>18</sup> Unlike the resolution-centred reconstruction which takes place in a dialectical analysis, the transformations in the audience-centred reconstruction of a rhetorical analysis are motivated by a rhetorical ideal. However, a consistent apparatus for rhetorical analysis, providing us with all the necessary tools for transformation, is, in spite of the long-standing tradition of this form of analysis, not available.

<sup>19</sup> A normative reconstruction in the dialectical sense represents a specific angle of approach which can be illuminating and, in the dialectical perspective, also the most appropriate. Naturally, other angles of approach are also possible. A psychological analysis, for instance, would undoubtedly be able to produce other interesting results. Things that appear as relevant from one angle remain out of sight when regarded from another. However, one angle of approach need not necessarily preclude another.

1. The points at issue
2. The positions that the parties concerned adopt with respect to these points
3. The explicit and implicit arguments that the parties adduce for their standpoints
4. The discussion stages
5. The structure of the argumentation which has been put forward
6. The argument schemes used in the various arguments

Identifying the points at issue entails determining the propositions with respect to which standpoints are adopted and called into question. Identifying the positions of the parties in the discussion amounts to determining who plays the part of the protagonist and who takes the role of the antagonist. Identifying the arguments often requires recognizing implicit arguments. This can even be more problematical if indirect argumentation is involved. Establishing the structure of the argumentation entails determining how the arguments put forward relate to the standpoint and to one another in their support of the standpoint. Identifying the argument schemes is vital to checking whether the critical questions that are pertinent to the evaluation of the various types of argumentation that are used have been (or can be) answered satisfactorily.<sup>20</sup>

## 5 Dialectical Transformations

The operations which are necessary for a normative reconstruction require the carrying out of four dialectical transformations: deletion, addition, permutation, and substitution.<sup>21</sup>

The dialectical transformation of *deletion* entails a selection of elements from the original discourse that are immediately relevant to the process of resolving the difference of opinion: elements that are irrelevant for this purpose, such as elaborations, clarifications, anecdotes, and side-lines, are omitted. Any repetitions that occur in the text, even if slightly differently worded, are also omitted.

The dialectical transformation of *addition* entails a process of completion which consists of the supplementation of those elements immediately relevant to the resolution of the difference of opinion but left unexpressed in the original discourse: unexpressed premises, unexpressed conclusions, and other unexpressed elements in

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<sup>20</sup> All elements of an analytical survey are of direct relevance to the evaluation of the argumentative discourse. If it is unclear what standpoint is being defended, there is no way of telling whether the argumentation that has been advanced is conclusive. And if more than one standpoint is being defended, it must be perfectly clear which language users are acting as the protagonist of which standpoint and exactly who is the source of the various argumentations that have been advanced in the defence of each standpoint. Otherwise, for example, it will be impossible to tell whether the various argumentations for the same standpoint actually constitute a coherent whole. Adequate evaluation of the argumentative discourse is also made more difficult where, as a result of implicitness or indirectness, arguments or unexpressed premises are overlooked or where it is unclear which argument schemes are relied on.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. van Eemeren (1986, 1987).

the various stages of discussion. Only elements that are instrumental for achieving the resolution of the difference of opinion are made explicit in the reconstruction.

The dialectical transformation of *permutation* entails the ordering or rearranging of elements in the original text in such a way that the dialectical process of resolving the difference of opinion is made as clear as possible: the various stages in the resolution process must be distinguished, and at the same time the overlap between different stages and the anticipation of steps to come, or a reference back to steps already dealt with, must be readjusted. Those parts of the confrontation stage, for example, which are postponed to the argumentation stage or even the concluding stage must be put in their dialectically “ideal” place.

The dialectical transformation of *substitution* entails an attempt to produce a clear and explicit presentation of elements fulfilling a dialectical function in the text. It also entails a uniform notation for elements which fulfil the same function. For example, some elements may function as arguments, although they are formulated as rhetorical questions. Other elements fulfil an identical, say argumentative function, but are phrased differently. In the reconstruction, the formulations of ordinary language should be replaced by theoretically defined standard phrases.

## 6 The Interpretation of Indirect Speech Acts

Speech act theory can be of great help in deciding when it is justified to carry out the four dialectical transformations.<sup>22</sup> We will demonstrate this for the dialectical transformation of substitution. In the analysis, we shall concentrate on the normative reconstruction of indirect speech acts in argumentative discourse.

In speech act theory, it is a recognized fact that in ordinary discourse the communicative force of a speech act is, as a rule, not expressed explicitly. This does not normally present much of a problem.

Indirectness is a special case of implicitness. In practice, listeners are almost always perfectly able to establish, on the basis of what the speaker has advanced in a particular context, which indirect speech act has been performed (if this is not the case, there is no point in performing it).

However, unlike language users who communicate person to person, the analyst of an argumentative discourse does not always have sufficient insight into all the contextual factors that may play a part in the interpretation of indirect language use.<sup>23</sup> This may make it difficult for him to say exactly how an indirect speech act can be inferred from the implicit speech act actually performed. In accounting for a certain interpretation, the general rules of communication just discussed may be useful.

<sup>22</sup> Elsewhere, van Eemeren and Grootendorst have demonstrated this for the dialectical transformation of addition with regard to such implicit elements as unexpressed premises. Cf. van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1982, 1983, 1984, 1992).

<sup>23</sup> For a distinction between four levels of context, see van Eemeren (2010), pp. 16–19.

With indirect speech acts, the literal interpretation of the implicit speech act performed involves some violation of a rule of communication. This violation may be rectified by interpreting the utterance concerned as an indirect speech act. With the help of the rules of communication, it can also be shown what kind of connection there is between the indirect speech act and the literal utterance. Thus, the rules make it possible both to establish that the literal interpretation of the utterance is not the only or final interpretation, and to infer the correct interpretation from the literal one.

In interpreting indirect language use, the premise is that the speaker wishes to continue to observe the principle of communication and hence wishes in principle to adhere to all the rules of communication so that any violation of these rules must be regarded only as an *apparent* violation which is undone as soon as the correct interpretation is placed on the utterance. In every utterance that is interpreted as an indirect speech act, it must be possible to indicate which rule of communication would be broken if the utterance were to be interpreted solely in a literal way. It must also be possible to make it clear that the violation concerned can be remedied by interpreting the utterance as an indirect speech act. The inference of indirect speech acts can always be accounted for by a fixed scheme of analytical steps. The only thing that varies is the exact rule that is violated and the kind of link between the literal utterance and the indirect speech act.

For the interpretation of the utterance “Can you get a move on?” as an indirect speech act, for example, the inference scheme should include the following steps:

1. The speaker has uttered a sentence: “Can you get a move on?”
2. In view of the literal meaning of the utterance, the speaker has thereby performed *speech act 1*, with *communicative force 1* and *propositional content 1*. Here the utterance is, literally speaking, a request for information about the physical abilities of the listener.
3. Given the context, *speech act 1* is a violation of a rule of communication. In a situation in which questioner and listener know each other well and know that there is no reason to doubt the listener’s physical abilities, a literal interpretation presupposes a violation of rule 3 (“Perform no unnecessary speech acts”). Because the speaker may be assumed to be familiar with the listener’s physical condition, in this interpretation, he or she would ask a question to which they already know the answer. This means that the speaker’s speech act is unnecessary if this literal interpretation is all there is.
4. Given the context, *speech act 2* observes the rule which seemed to be offended and all the other rules. If the utterance is interpreted as a request to get a move on, this at once undoes the violation of rule 3. Unless some other rule is broken, it may be assumed in this case that the utterance is an indirect request.
5. The connection between *speech act 1*, *speech act 2*, and the context can be established by means of one or more of the rules of communication. In this case, rule 4 (“Perform no pointless speech acts”) enables us to link the literal utterance to the indirect speech act. A preparatory condition for the request necessary to ensure that sufficient effort is made to arrive on time is that the speaker

assumes that the listener is in a position to accede to the request. For example, if the speaker knows in advance that this is not the case, he or she is performing a pointless speech act and violates rule 4. By asking “Can you get a move on?”, the speaker ensures that the indirect request will not be violating rule 4.

6. Therefore: *speech act 2* is a correct interpretation of the utterance. This means in this case that “Can you get a move on?” may be interpreted as an indirect request to move on.

In indirect speech acts, the context can play a role that is to a greater or lesser extent important. In some cases, the inference cannot take place without referring to the context, in others it can. As van Eemeren and Grootendorst have explained, in order to interpret an indirect utterance in an “undefined” context, more “conventionalization” of the utterance involved is required, whereas in a more “defined” context, weaker forms of “conventionalization” suffice. Apart from that, the difference between “propositional” and “communicative” indirectness, which can also occur in combination, should be taken into account. Whereas in the more conventionalized request “Can you get a move on?”, communicative indirectness is at stake, in “The coast is clear” (in a well-defined context meaning: “Go ahead”), propositional indirectness also plays a part in interpreting the literal statement as an exhortation.<sup>24</sup>

## 7 The Substitution of Indirect Arguments and Standpoints

In argumentative discourse, indirectness can occur in various ways. To give just one example:

Let’s take a cab. You don’t want to be late for the show, do you?

Carrying out a resolution-oriented normative reconstruction, we would indeed say that we have argumentation here. But where is the standpoint and where is the argument? The standpoint is to be found in the first sentence and the argument in the second. However, the first sentence clearly has the communicative force of a proposal, and the second of a question. How can we justify the carrying out of the dialectical transformation of substitution which transforms the first utterance into a standpoint and the second utterance into an argument (reason)? Performing a proposal presupposes that the speaker himself believes it to be a *good* proposal. According to the preparatory conditions for the performance of a proposal, the speaker also wants it to be accepted by the listener, otherwise the proposal would be pointless, and this would constitute a violation of rule 4.

This means that the communication principle underlying the communication rules as it is specified by the speech act conditions has to be complemented by an interaction principle (“Perform no speech acts which are not correct and which are

<sup>24</sup> Cf. van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992), pp. 56–59.

not acceptable to the listener”), in order to account for the fact that in performing a speech act, the speaker is not only supposed to believe that the act is correct from his or her own point of view, but also that it is acceptable to the listener to whom the speech act is addressed. Otherwise, what it means to give a reason in support of a proposal would remain unexplained, as happens in the example.<sup>25</sup>

One way to get the proposal accepted by the listener would be to show that it is in the listener’s best interest. By asking rhetorically whether the listener wants to be late for the show, the speaker indirectly provides a possibly conclusive reason for the listener: The speaker surely knows very well that the listener does *not* want to be late (at the same time it is understood that not taking a cab would cause this unwanted effect).<sup>26</sup> By adding the rhetorical question to his proposal, the speaker tries to resolve a potential difference of opinion with the listener in advance.

This explains how the speaker’s proposal can be transformed into the standpoint that it is wise to take a cab, and the speaker’s rhetorical question into the argumentation that otherwise they will be late for the show (which is undesirable). Although more could be said about this reconstruction, it suffices to show the merits of a speech act perspective in helping to get the transformation of substitution carried out properly.

There is a difference in the degree of conventionalization between the case of the standpoint and the case of the argumentation. A rhetorical question is highly conventionalized, whereas the “indirectness” of the proposal made in the standpoint is not: it is only given a well-defined context that it is possible to detect the “indirectness” and find the correct interpretation accordingly.

## 8 Clues for the Reconstruction of Argumentation in the Macro-Context

Over the past decades, the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation has been developed systematically from the abstract level of an ideal model of a critical discussion to the concrete reality of situated argumentative discourse in a specific macro-context. The macro-context in which the argumentative discourse takes place provides other clues for the reconstruction of standpoints and argumentation.

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<sup>25</sup> As a rule, every speech act presupposes its own acceptability. The Interaction Principle enables us to explain why speakers, even when the listener does not ask for it, take the effort to establish the acceptability of their speech acts by putting forward direct or indirect arguments. The interaction principle reflects in its formulation Sperber and Wilson’s principle of relevance: “Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance” (1986, p. 158). There are important differences, however. Firstly, the interaction principle is more general than the principle of relevance—even if relevance is taken in its broadest sense—and, secondly, it is formulated in terms of speech act theory, whereas Sperber and Wilson make it their business to reject speech act theory completely (1986, pp. 243–254).

<sup>26</sup> The sentence in parentheses refers to the unexpressed premise in the argumentation.

Strategic manoeuvring does not take part in an idealized critical discussion but in the multi-varied communicative practices that have developed in the various communicative domains. In the extended pragma-dialectical theory, the institutionally motivated conventionalization of these communicative practices is therefore duly taken into account (van Eemeren 2010, pp. 129–162). Because these practices have been established in specific *communicative activity types*, which are characterized by the way in which they have been conventionalized, these communicative activity types constitute the institutional macro-context in which argumentative discourse is to be examined. The conventionalization of an activity type may be formalized, as is generally the case in the legal domain, but the conventionalization may also be less formal or even informal, as is customary in the political and interpersonal domains.

The *institutional point* of a communicative activity type, which defines its rationale, reflects the institutional exigency in response to which an activity type has come into being and the conventionalization of the communicative activity type is instrumental in realizing the institutional point. The genres of communicative activity used to realize the institutional points of the various communicative activity types vary from “adjudication” and “deliberation” to “disputation” and “communion-seeking”. In the strictly conventionalized communicative activity types of the legal domain, for instance, adjudication is used to maintain justice by obtaining legal verdicts; in the less-strictly conventionalized communicative activity types of the political domain, deliberation is used to make the political system operate by debating policy decisions; in the intersubjectively conventionalized communicative activity types of the academic domain, disputation is used to bring about intellectual progress by testing scientific claims; and in the informally conventionalized communicative activity types of the interpersonal domain, communion-seeking is used to confirm interpersonal relationships by creating a shared background of mutually accepted opinions.

A great many communicative activity types have a specific aim linked to the institutional point. This aim usually is embodied in a central illocutionary act. This illocutionary act can be a proposal, a judgement, a claim or other type of assertion, a warning, an advice, etc. Because the speaker or writer will anticipate possible problems with regard to the felicity conditions that pertain to this central illocutionary act, he or she will provide argumentation in order to show that these conditions are met. Not only is the central illocutionary act easier to identify and reconstruct, the argumentation related to the felicity conditions involved will also be easier to identify and reconstruct.

A case in point is the illocutionary act of advising that is the central speech act in health brochures with an advisory slant. Because the institutional conventions of health brochures incorporating an advisory standpoint affect the strategic manoeuvring, knowledge of this activity type can provide decisive information for reconstructing a certain piece of argumentative discourse. In health brochures, the potential disagreement arises because by means of the performance of the speech act of advising, a particular kind of behaviour is encouraged or discouraged. In principle, the disagreement relates to three types of felicity conditions: correctness conditions concerning the usefulness of the health advice, correctness conditions



concerning the necessity of the health advice, or correctness conditions concerning the responsibility of the writer.

To justify the usefulness of the advice, a writer stereotypically uses pragmatic argumentation to demonstrate the beneficial outcome of following the advice. To justify the presumption that the reader is willing and able to act on the advice, a writer may use, for instance, measuring tools or specific information to make the reader aware of the health risks; also, the writer may offer practical tips to perform the advised action. The writer may emphasize the authority of the institution by explicitly stating expertise and status. Finally, the responsibility of the writer could be affirmed by arguing that the institution is independent and uses trustworthy sources (van Poppel 2013, pp. 62–63).

Knowledge about the central speech act, and knowing the type of argumentation that may be put forward to meet doubt regarding certain correctness conditions are important tools for the reconstruction of argumentation in a health brochure. In health brochures, the central speech act is advising and the most strategic choice of means for sustaining the advice is pragmatic argumentation or authority argumentation; consequently, the analyst may expect these types of argumentation.

## 9 Conclusion

An important advantage of using a speech act approach in reconstructing argumentative discourse is that it enables us to take account of the fact that standpoints and arguments do not always consist of assertive statements. Arguments can be presented by means of all kinds of speech acts and they can pertain to all kinds of speech acts functioning as standpoints.<sup>27</sup>

This is really a big step forward compared to the view which restricts argumentation to assertions which can be considered true or false.<sup>28</sup> A speech act perspective not only shows that this view is inadequate, but it can also systematically account for the diversity in the kinds of speech acts that can function as standpoints and arguments. This is shown in the normative reconstruction of argumentative discourse. In this way, a pragma-dialectical analysis provides a clearer insight into what is going on in argumentative discourse when it is seen from a resolution-oriented perspective.

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. van Eemeren (1986).

<sup>28</sup> As a matter of fact, one of Austin's reasons for developing a theory of speech acts refers to the logical positivists simplistic dichotomy between truth-functional statements and non-truth-functional statements. According to Austin, performative utterances are both non-truth functional and non-metaphysical.

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# Presupposition as Argumentative Reasoning

Fabrizio Macagno

**Abstract** Presuppositions are pragmatically considered as the conditions of the felicity of a speech act, or discourse move; however, the decision of setting the conditions of a move, which the hearer needs to accept in order to continue the dialogue, can be thought of as a speech act of a kind. The act of presupposing depends on specific conditions and in particular on the possibility of the hearer to reconstruct and accept the propositional content. These pragmatic conditions lead to epistemic considerations: How can the speaker know that the hearer can reconstruct and accept a presupposition? A possible answer can be found in an argumentative approach grounded on the notion of presumptive reasoning. On this perspective, by presupposing the speaker advances a tentative conclusion about what the hearer may accept, hold, or know proceeding from factual, linguistic, and epistemic rules of presumption.

**Keywords** Presupposition · Implicatures · Argumentation theory · Pragmatics

When we talk, discuss, or try to persuade our interlocutor, we leave most of the information needed to communicate implicit: We simply pragmatically presuppose it. We never remind our interlocutor of the definitions of the words that we use; we never describe people, things, or places that our interlocutor may know, or we think he may know. We draw conclusions from conditional premises that we very rarely express; we take turns in speaking and prove a point without telling why we act in such a fashion, without stating the rules governing our discussion. How is it linguistically possible to leave all such information implicit? How can we perform communication moves, leaving rules, definitions, and propositions unexpressed?

The problem of the implicit grounds of dialogue is twofold. It is a linguistic matter, as presuppositions are the conditions of meaning. But it is also an epistemic problem, because we take the presupposed information for granted, as already shared by the hearer. We do not state such information because we believe that he can know it, or he can retrieve or reconstruct it. However, how can we know that a

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proposition is already known, or that it can be reconstructed? Why can we believe that our interlocutor may know or accommodate a presupposition?

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the linguistic and epistemic dimensions of presupposition from an argumentative perspective, showing the nature and the effects of the reasoning underlying the possibility of presupposing. To this purpose, presupposition will be first investigated as an implicit act aimed at setting forth the conditions of the continuation of a dialogue. Such an act is, in turn, subject to some constraints, rooted in the epistemic problem of knowing the other's mind. The argumentative approach can provide a possible explanation, presenting presupposition as the result of a process of presumptive reasoning made by the speaker.

## 1 The Meanings of Presupposition

Several linguistic and pragmatic phenomena fall under the label of presupposition (Chomsky 1972, p. 112; Green 1996, p. 72). The very term “presupposition” is ambiguous, as it may refer to the semantic conditions for the verification of a sentence (a logical relationship between two statements, see Kempson 1975, pp. 50–51), to the background assumptions underlying discourse (intended as a chain of sentences) cohesion (Sandulescu 1975), or to a much broader pragmatic concept, denoting the propositions that are taken for granted in the uttering of a linguistic expression and on whose truth, or better acceptance and knowledge by the hearer, the felicity of the statement depends (Wilson 1975, p. 26; Green 1996, p. 72). Another (operational) definition was provided by Keenan (1971, p. 45), who identified presupposition by means of the test of negation. On his view, the presupposition of a sentence is entailed by both the sentence and its negation (for the weakness of this definition, see Katz 1973).

Presuppositions have been usually considered as conditions of verification of a sentence (see Wilson 1975, pp. 43–44). For instance, if the referent of the subject of a sentence does not exist, the sentence cannot be verified (such as, for instance, in the famous example, “The king of France is bald”). However, as reference can be only determined in context, presupposition is a property not of sentences, but of the *use* of sentences, or statements (Strawson 1950, p. 1952; Karttunen 1973; Kempson 1975; Wilson 1975; Keenan 1971). For this reason, Strawson (1950, p. 325) distinguished sentences from their uses and from the utterances expressing them. Thus, from a logical perspective, presuppositions are considered as properties of the use of sentences. However, the logical criterion of truth (implying a God's eye view) needs to be relativized in order to describe a phenomenon concerning the actual use of natural language. Depending on background knowledge, a sentence can be true or false, and, therefore, either verifiable or meaningless; depending on its belonging to the pragmatic universe of discourse, or shared knowledge, a proposition can be known to be true or false (Kempson 1975, pp. 168–170).

This pragmatic concept of truth allows one to understand the relationship between the logical and the pragmatic perspectives on the use of language. As Hamblin

(1970, p. 240) pointed out, talking about what is true for a language user amounts to what *he knows* to be true. However, since we do not proceed from what is absolutely known to be true but from what we *believe*, or rather accept, to be true, the concept of verification must be replaced by the weaker criterion of acceptability (Hamblin 1970, pp. 242–243; Walton and Macagno 2005a, b). Acceptability is an assessment (and, therefore, a decision) of the agent, and not a judgment external to him or her. This pragmatic view of verification leads to analyzing meaning in terms of effects on the audience instead of in terms of truth (Grice 1975, 1989, p. 220; Levinson 1983, p. 97; Austin 1962, pp. 50–51). On this perspective, also the nature of presupposition needs to be enlarged, and presuppositional failures need to be accounted for not in terms of non-verifiability, but rather of lack of effects on the interlocutor or the audience. For example, in the case of assertions, such a failure results in the impossibility of judging a statement as acceptable or not.

The pragmatic criterion of acceptability (instead of the logical one of truth) affects the very definition of the concept of presupposition. Presupposition becomes what the speaker assumes to be true, or, rather, to be accepted by the interlocutor (Kempson 1975, p. 54). On this pragmatic perspective, presuppositions need to be defined as conditions of “meaningfulness” of speech acts. Thus, presuppositional failures result in the failure of a speech act to carry out its intended effect on the audience. This social dimension of meaningfulness and presupposition was underscored by Austin, who pointed out how the falsity of presuppositions causes the infelicity of a speech act (Austin 1962, pp. 50–51):

Next let us consider presupposition: what is to be said of the statement that “John’s children are all bald” if made when John has no children? It is usual now to say that it is not false because it is devoid of reference; reference is necessary for either truth or falsehood. (Is it then meaningless? It is not so in every sense: it is not, like a “meaningless sentence,” ungrammatical, incomplete, mumbo-jumbo, &c.) People say “the question does not arise.” Here I shall say “the utterance is void.”

In Austin’s example, the speaker is presupposing that there is a person called John, and that he has children. We notice that the speaker is not presupposing the *existence* of such entities, but simply their existence in the *listener’s domain of knowledge*. This pragmatic view extends the notion of presupposition to several phenomena of meaningfulness constraints (Austin 1962, pp. 34, 51), such as selectional restrictions, coherence relations, and felicity conditions. Such linguistic phenomena are conditions that need to be complied with for the interlocutor to understand the move. Therefore, these linguistic presuppositions are included within the pragmatic conditions for the felicity of a speech act.

The basic distinction between logical and pragmatic presupposition lies in the principles according to which language and discourse are assessed. From a logical perspective, the basic concern is the verifiability of statements (sentences that can be true or false in some context of utterance, or possible world, see Kempson 1975, p. 51). From a pragmatic point of view, the focus is on the felicity of a discourse move, or possible effect of a speech act on the interlocutor (for the notion of presupposition as felicity conditions, see Stalnaker 1970; Kempson 1975). To these two accounts we can add the linguistic criterion, in which the correctness or

coherence becomes the principle for the assessment. The three approaches are not mutually exclusive. A sentence with false presuppositions cannot constitute a coherent discourse, but the sentences of an incoherent discourse can still be verifiable. An incoherent discourse cannot be felicitous (“I am hungry! Bring the soap!”), while a coherent discourse can be infelicitous (for instance, the statement “You are really good. I hereby appoint you CEO of the company,” uttered by a clerk to an official).

The problem of the definition of presupposition hides under and is grounded on the problem of the linguistic and pragmatic phenomena that trigger presuppositions, which can be addressed by taking into account the communication level at which presuppositions are triggered (Sandulescu 1975; see also Green 1996, pp. 72–77). Considering the broadest notion of pragmatic presupposition from another perspective, the different kinds of presuppositional phenomena occur at a linguistic and pragmatic level, triggered by semantic or syntactic items or structures, or by the illocutionary force of the utterance or the use thereof within a dialogical context.

## 2 Presuppositions: Linguistic Level

At the linguistic level, we distinguish well-formed sentences such as “The king of France is bald” from sentences that are not well formed, such as “Australia is bald” or “The stone died” (Seuren 2000, p. 279; Atlas 2005; Levin 1977, p. 33). The problem of grammaticality was thoroughly analyzed by Katz and Fodor (1963) and by Chomsky (1971). From such approaches and subsequent studies, a crucial relationship emerges between the conditions required by semantic predicates (or selectional restrictions) and the fundamental semantic features of their arguments. Selectional restrictions can be described as the conditions (or preconditions, Seuren 2000, p. 277) that a predicate imposes on the elements acting as its arguments (Hobbs 1979, p. 70; Grimes 1975, p. 162). Such conditions represent the categorical presuppositions of a predicate (McCawley 1971, p. 290; Antley 1974; Chomsky 1971, p. 205), namely, the categorical conditions that the semantic structure arguments of the predicate need to satisfy. For instance, the predicate “to kill” requires an “animate being” as a second argument. Therefore, in order for the predicate to be correctly attributed to an entity acting as its grammatical subject, the latter needs to be animated (Rigotti 2005, p. 79).

There are several types of semantic presuppositions corresponding to the different types of predicates, conceiving this latter term as a logical functor that attributes a quality to an argument, or that binds one or more arguments into a relation (Seuren 2000, pp. 328–331). Quantifiers and determiners impose specific conditions on nouns (it would be ungrammatical to say “\*I ate *a* rice”), adjectives on nouns (I cannot say “\*The apple is *happy* today”), adverbs on verbs (it would be meaningless to say “\*I slept really *slowly*”).

Presuppositions can also be triggered by syntactic elements such as conjunctions (“\*America began its expansion after Germany won WW2”), prepositions (“\*I am walking in the park with Australia”), or particular syntactic constructions, such as cleft sentences (“\*It was in the USA that the Martians won the match”; Frege 1948,

pp. 224, 222: Strawson 1971; Rigotti and Cigada 2004; Gundel and Fretheim 2004; Hockett 1950; Green 1996, p. 74; Capone 2013).

At an inter-sentence level, presuppositions can be triggered by predicates of higher level, the connectors (Karttunen 1973, p. 176). In this case, the arguments are both sentences that can be used as discourse units, and presuppose specific relations between them. For instance, we consider the following famous case (Lakoff 1971, p. 133):

John is tall, but he is no good at basketball.

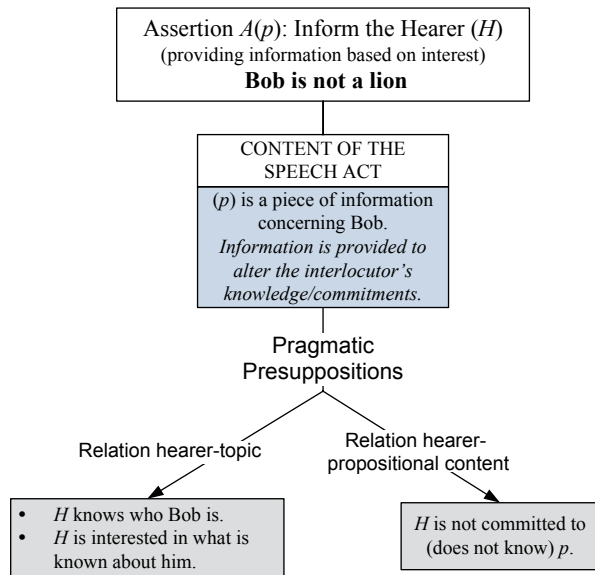
Lakoff notices that this sentence is composed of an assertion (John is tall, and he is no good at basketball) and a presupposition triggered by “but” (If someone is tall, then one would expect him to be good at basketball). The effect is a denial of expectation, which was described by Ducrot as the contradiction by the second conjunct of a presupposed conclusion (in this case, “John is good at basketball”; Ducrot 1978). Similarly, the connective “and” presupposes a common relevance or topic (Lakoff 1971, p. 128; Kempson 1975, p. 58), or a causal or temporal order of the sequences (Ballard et al. 1971). Subordinating connectives, such as “therefore,” specify more precisely the type of relationship between the sequences. For instance, the predicate “therefore” pragmatically presupposes that the first sequence is a reason supporting the second one (Vanderveken 2002, p. 47; Bach 2003, p. 163; see also Grice 1975, p. 44).

### 3 Presuppositions: Pragmatic Level

At a pragmatic level, sentence and inter-sentence presuppositions become necessary conditions for the felicity of the move, as ungrammatical sentences can hardly express a communicative intention (Austin 1962, pp. 50–51). However, in addition to these grammaticality requirements, other kinds of presupposition need to be fulfilled in order for a speech act to be felicitous. As Austin noticed, the speech act of appointing someone is not possible if the speaker has no social role entitling him to do so, or if the appointee has already been appointed, or is not a person (Austin 1962, pp. 34, 51). On this perspective, speech acts presuppose procedures (Austin 1962, p. 30; Searle and Vanderveken 1985, pp. 66–67), roles, and institutions but also the interlocutors’ interests, values, and preferences. As Ducrot pointed out (1966, p. 46), it would be “linguistically absurd” to say “I have met Pierre this morning” if my interlocutor is not interested in Pierre.

The set of pragmatic presuppositions (Stalnaker 1974; Searle and Vanderveken 1985, pp. 66–67; Bach 2003, p. 163) can be thought of as imposed by an abstract predicate connecting the dialogue unit with the interlocutors, namely, with their background knowledge (see Rigotti and Rocci 2001; Rigotti 2005; Rigotti and Rocci 2006; see also Asher and Lascarides 1998). The communicative intention, or rather the purpose of the speech act, is represented as a logical–semantic connective, which assigns a role to each speech act (Grosz and Sidnert 1986, p. 178; Walton 1989, p. 68). For example, if we assert that, “Bob is not a lion,” we presuppose a set of information that can be represented as given in (Fig. 1).

**Fig. 1** Presuppositions of a speech act in a dialogue



In this figure, we notice two categories of presuppositional requirements at the pragmatic level. The purpose of the move is established, based on an interpretation of the illocutionary force (assertions are usually performed to inform the interlocutor). The communicative intention is depicted as a connective, whose arguments are the different types of relations between the interlocutor and the subject matter (presupposition of interest of the act) and between the interlocutor and the propositional content (informativeness of the act). In this specific case, if Bob is not known by the hearer, then the assertion will be infelicitous, as it cannot provide information that is relevant and accessible to the interlocutor. Moreover, the act can fail to achieve its goal (to provide *new* and interesting information) if the proposition expressed *cannot* provide information that is presumably not shared by the hearer. In particular, this example points out a critical case, as the propositional content corresponds to a tautology (a man by definition is not a lion), which cannot be informative in normal conditions (the hearer knows the ordinary meaning of the ordinary English words). This presuppositional failure leads to the crucial issue of accommodation and the levels of accommodation, which will be treated in Sects. 5 and 6.

The pragmatic level leads to taking into account a wider context of use of a speech act. Every speech act is aimed at achieving a specific dialogical purpose, which, in turn, results in a specific dialogical effect onto the interlocutor, namely limiting the paradigm of his possible replies (Ducrot 1972a, b; Macagno and Walton 2014, Chap. 7). Every speech act is not a “disconnected remark,” (Grice 1975, p. 45) but rather an effort to reach a common dialogical purpose. For this reason, some possible conversational moves will be excluded as unsuitable. For instance, the following conversational exchange cannot be considered as reasonable (Carroll 2010, Chap. 7):



“I didn’t know it was *your* table,” said Alice; “it’s laid for a great many more than three.”  
 “Your hair wants cutting,” said the Hatter. He had been looking at Alice for some time with great curiosity, and this was his first speech.

“You should learn not to make personal remarks,” Alice said with some severity; “it’s very rude.”

The Hatter opened his eyes very wide on hearing this; but all he *said* was, “Why is a raven like a writing desk?”

Every speech act presupposes a paradigm of possible replies, setting out the possibilities of continuing the dialogue. This common dialogical purpose can be regarded as a pragmatic connective of higher level (Wüest 2001), representing the common dialogical intention (Crothers 1979; Rigotti 2005; Hobbs 1979, p. 68; Hobbs 1985). From a pragmatic perspective, these relations can be considered as high-level speech acts (Grice 1989, p. 362; Carston 2002, pp. 107–108), imposing a set of presuppositions, or felicity conditions, on the first-level speech acts (Vanderveken 2002, p. 28; Wüest 2001).

In this sense, the global purpose of the dialogue, represented by a high-level connective (Walton 1989; further developed in Walton and Krabbe 1995; Walton 1998), determines the local goal of the interlocutors’ moves by imposing specific conditions (Macagno 2008; Walton 1989, pp. 65–71). For instance, if a friend argues that the economic situation in Europe is tragic, as the Central Bank said so, it would be unreasonable to threaten him in order to win the discussion (“If you do not take back what you said I will punch you”), or negotiate with him a position (“I think it is not, let’s agree that it is not so bad”).

## 4 The Action of the *Pragmatic* Presuppositions

As mentioned above, several phenomena are labeled as presuppositions, including the controversial semantic presuppositions and the wider class of felicity conditions of speech acts and coherence relations. The common characteristic of all these phenomena is that a proposition *p* is presupposed when it is taken for granted in performing a speech act whose felicity depends on the interlocutor’s acceptance of *p*. To presuppose a proposition is “to take its truth for granted, and to assume that others involved in the context do the same” (Stalnaker 1970, p. 279). This “taking a proposition for granted” has been analyzed by Stalnaker as a propositional attitude which can be interpreted as an action of a kind (Stalnaker 2002, p. 701):

Speaker presupposition is a propositional attitude of the speaker, but I and others who have emphasized the role of speaker presupposition in the explanation of linguistic phenomena have been vague and equivocal about exactly what propositional attitude it is. To presuppose something is to take it for granted, or at least to act as if one takes it for granted, as background information—as *common ground* among the participants in the conversation.

Therefore, presuppositions are *made* by the speakers (Stalnaker 1970, p. 279), in the sense that presupposing a proposition amounts to a form of decision made by the speaker to treat some information as already known by the interlocutor. This

idea of analyzing presuppositions in terms of their effects, and relating them to the speaker's intentions is also developed by Kempson. She maintains that presupposing a proposition amounts to treating it as belonging to the common knowledge, or universe of discourse. For instance, the utterance of a sentence containing a definite noun phrase (used as a topic) implies "(a) that the speaker believes that there is an object to which the noun phrase refers, (b) that the speaker believes that the hearer believes that there is an object to which the noun phrase refers, and (c) the speaker believes that the hearer knows which object is referred to" (Kempson 1975, p. 17; see also the weaker definition set forth in Stalnaker (1974, p. 200), in which the hearer is simply assumed or believed to believe that  $p$  and to recognize that the speaker is making this assumption). However, this implication is "deliberately invoked" by the speaker, who "wishes to convey that the hearer knows what object he is intending to refer to" (Kempson 1975, p. 180). From these accounts, two crucial elements emerge: (1) presupposition can be considered as a form of *decision* to treat a proposition as shared; (2) presuppositions are crucially related to the speaker and hearer's beliefs and knowledge (Schwarz 1977, p. 248). However, the definition of a linguistic phenomenon in terms of beliefs or assumptions risks confounding the phenomenon with its accidental effects or possible explanations. How can a speaker *believe* or *assume* that a proposition is shared by the hearer? How would it be possible to presuppose propositions which are *known not to be shared*, without the sentence being meaningless?

A possible explanation of presupposition in nonpsychological terms can be proposed by developing the first characteristic the accounts mentioned above seem to suggest: The nature of presupposition as an act of a kind. Presupposing a proposition can be described as the performance of an implicit speech act, in which the speaker subordinates the felicity of his move to the listener's acceptance of some conditions. This idea was put forward by Ducrot, who described presupposition as the set of conditions that need to be fulfilled in order to satisfy the pretension of carrying out an effect on the listener (see Ducrot 1966). On this view, their failure, determined by the interlocutor's rejection, causes the infelicity of a communicative move (or speech act). In such an event, a move becomes simply void, that is, it cannot be considered as a move anymore.

On Ducrot's structuralistic perspective, presuppositions limit the field of the possible moves of the interlocutor within a dialogue game. For instance, if he accepts the assertion that "I have met Pierre this morning," he also implicitly agrees to a conversational situation in which the topic is *Pierre*. On the contrary, if the hearer refuses the presupposition, he terminates the dialogue game. Ducrot accounted for this pragmatic effect of presupposition defining it as an implicit speech act (Ducrot 1968, p. 87):

Comme le joueur d'échecs doit accepter le champ de possibilités que crée pour lui la manœuvre de son adversaire, le participant d'un dialogue doit reprendre à son compte certains au moins des présupposés introduits par les phrases auxquelles il répond.

Ducrot claimed that the speech acts need to be divided in an explicit act of stating (the *posé*) and an implicit act of presupposing (the *présupposé*). This latter act is aimed at setting the possible moves that can be performed by the interlocutor, that is, the possible dialogical world (Stalnaker 1970, p. 280) that determines the boundaries of the linguistic moves (Ducrot 1972b)<sup>1</sup>. On this view, the act of presupposing sets the conditions of a dialogue game (Ducrot 1972a, p. 91):

Présupposer un certain contenu, c'est placer l'acceptation de ce contenu comme la condition du dialogue ultérieur. On voit alors pourquoi le choix des présupposés nous apparaît comme un acte de parole particulier (que nous appelons acte de présupposer), acte à valeur juridique et donc illocutoire[...]: en accomplissant, on transforme du même coup les possibilités de parole de l'interlocuteur. [...] Lorsqu'on introduit des présupposés dans un énoncé, on fixe, pour ainsi dire, le prix à payer pour que la conversation puisse continuer.

By analyzing presupposition as an act it is possible to explain how and why the speaker can treat a proposition as part of the common ground even if it is not. While assertion can be counted as a proposal of adding a proposition *p* to the shared propositions (see von Stechow 2008, p. 139), presupposition can be considered as the act of treating *p* as already shared (see Horn and Ward 2004, p. xii; Atlas 2008; Lewis 1979, p. 339). Such an act does not depend on what the interlocutors *actually* share, or on what the speaker believes (Burton-Roberts 1989, p. 26). A proposition that has been assumed as not shared can be presupposed in the sense that it has been advanced as a condition or ground of the dialogue. The analysis of presupposition as an act separates the linguistic phenomena triggering it from its dialogical effects, and its effects from its epistemic conditions.

## 5 The Limits and the Conditions of the Act of Presupposing

One of the most interesting and problematic dimensions of presupposition, especially concerning their treatment in psychological terms, is that we can presuppose propositions that we *know* to be unshared. For instance, Ducrot (1966, p. 42) noticed that it is possible to imagine the enemies of Caesar or Napoleon during the Roman consulate or the French Republic talking about the magnificence, or the richness or the wisdom of the *king*. In this case, the speaker was presupposing false or unshared propositions (“Caesar (or Napoleon) is a king”). However, their

<sup>1</sup> On Ducrot's view, the communicative game resembles a chess game, in which the possibilities are set by means of presuppositions: “dans ce combat simulé—qui substitue aux possibilités réelles, dues à la force, les possibilités morales dues aux conventions—les règles permettent aux joueurs de se contraindre mutuellement à certaines actions, et de s'en interdire certaines autres” (Ducrot 1968, p. 83); “pour trouver une description sémantique satisfaisante d'un phénomène comme la présupposition, phénomène qui est repérable selon des critères syntaxiques précis, il nous a été nécessaire de la relier aux règles qui définissent conventionnellement le jeu du langage, et de décrire la présupposition par rapport aux manœuvres dont elle fournit le thème : sa réalité, comme celle d'une règle des échecs, consiste seulement à rendre possible un jeu” (Ducrot 1972b, p. 27).

assertions, far from being void, might have caused them serious troubles for their meaning. This case illustrates a crucial problem concerning presupposition, the possibility of treating as shared a proposition that is actually not granted or that does not belong to the hearer's common knowledge, called "accommodation" (see Lewis 1979; von Stechow 2008). From the analysis of the limits of such a process of reconstruction, it is possible to understand the conditions characterizing the speech act of presupposition.

### 5.1 Accommodation

Accommodation was described by Lewis as a process of adjustment of the common ground, in which the presupposed proposition comes into existence when not previously known (Lewis 1979, p. 340):

If at time  $t$  something is said that requires presupposition  $P$  to be acceptable and if  $P$  is not presupposed just before  $t$ , then—*ceteris paribus* and within certain limits—presupposition  $P$  comes into existence at  $t$ .

In this definition, some boundaries of accommodation are mentioned without being specified. Lewis noticed that the process of reconstruction, or rather the process of bringing into existence presupposed propositions, is not totally free. For instance, in the cases above, the hearers of Caesar or Napoleon could retrieve the presupposed information. However, in that specific historical time the same people could not state that "The king of Myanmar is bald" without being infelicitous. The limits of accommodation have been investigated by Soames, who noticed that the presupposed propositions can be reconstructed only when they have already been accepted by the interlocutor, or they do not conflict with the interlocutor's common ground (Soames 1982, p. 486):

Utterance Presupposition. An utterance  $U$  presupposes  $P$  (at  $t$ ) if one can reasonably infer from  $U$  that the speaker  $S$  accepts  $P$  and regards it as uncontroversial, either because

- a.  $S$  thinks that it is already part of the conversational context at  $t$ , or because
- b.  $S$  thinks that the audience is prepared to add it, without objection, to the context against which  $U$  is evaluated.

These conditions, however, are based on speaker's beliefs about the interlocutor's common knowledge. In the Caesar and Napoleon cases cited above, the speaker actually *knows* that the presupposition that "Caesar is a king" is not in the conversational context, and actually conflicts with the interlocutors' common knowledge.

### 5.2 The Conditions of Accommodation

In order to analyze the conditions of presupposition, it is useful to examine when a proposition can be presupposed, by distinguishing between two different dimen-

sions of accommodation, retrieval, and acceptance (or rather possibility and reasonableness). Stalnaker (1998, p. 8) explains the first characteristic claiming that the speaker can only *presume* that the presupposed information is *available* to his or her audience. In his view, the speaker can presuppose a proposition only because he or she can conclude that the interlocutor can retrieve such information. For instance, we consider the following case:

1. Bob was at the party too (no parties were mentioned before and the listener does not know who Bob is)

Let us consider such sentence as uttered in a context in which no parties and no guests have been previously mentioned. The presuppositions that “Hearer knows which party I am talking about” (triggered by “the”), “Hearer knows who Bob is”, and “Other people were at the party” (triggered by “too”) cannot be reconstructed without a specific dialogical context. Unless the party and Bob can be identified through the context, the presuppositions cannot be reconstructed, and the meaning cannot be even retrieved. The hearer can obtain the information that there was a party and that there were other people at the party as they are “implicit contents” of the sentence (Bach 1999). However, if he does not know that there was a party, he cannot reconstruct the information “the aforementioned party”, triggered by the determined article. In (1), the speaker presupposes two propositions that the hearer cannot accommodate because he cannot retrieve them. The *possibility* of reconstructing a presupposition was underscored by Asher and Lascarides, who claimed that the mere concept of adding a proposition to a context cannot explain why and how some presuppositions can be accommodated, and why others cannot. As they put it (Asher and Lascarides 1998, p. 255), “presuppositions must always be rhetorically bound to the context, rather than added.” Presuppositions need to be related to the propositions already known, from which they may be derived through defeasible reasoning (Hobbs 1979; Asher and Lascarides 1998, p. 277). Building on this view, the *possibility* of reconstructing the presuppositions depends on the possibility of retrieving them, based on the linguistic and pragmatic data provided by means of a pattern of reasoning. On this perspective, the reconstruction of a presupposition is essentially related with the plausible reasoning underlying its retrieval.

The second characteristic of accommodation is acceptability, which can be referred to the major premise of the reasoning or its conclusion. The possibility of reconstructing a presupposed proposition depends on the possibility of abducing it by means of defeasible reasoning, and, therefore, on the existence of the premises supporting the conclusion. Sometimes the reasoning is possible because the premise allowing the hearer to reconstruct the proposition is provided, but the reasoning itself or the conclusion cannot be accepted by the interlocutor. For instance, we consider the following cases (see Stalnaker 1998, p. 9):

2. I can't come to the meeting—I have to pick up my cat at the veterinarian.
3. My dog got an A in Math.
4. I have to pick up my Martian friend at the Voodoo club.
5. Bob is tall. Therefore he is really rich.

In (2), the hearer can reconstruct the fact that the speaker owns a cat and can accept both the reasoning (if someone has to pick up his cat, he owns a cat) and the conclusion (he can accept that usually people have pets). On the contrary, the presuppositions of (3), (4), and (5) are unacceptable for different reasons. In (3), the accommodation reasoning is based on a conditional that cannot be accepted, “If  $x$  studies, then  $x$  can be a dog.” This premise conflicts with semantic rules and therefore is simply known to be false. In (4), the reasoning can be acceptable, but the conclusion (“the speaker has a Martian friend”) is hardly acceptable, as usually people maintain that Martians do not exist. Similarly, in (5), the conditional can be reconstructed, but normally height is not considered as leading to richness, and, therefore, the conclusion cannot be accepted.

The *possibility* of presupposing needs, therefore, to be distinguished from the *acceptability* of a proposition taken for granted. Not only does the hearer need to be able to derive the missing information from the semantic, syntactic, pragmatic, and discursive conditions that the predicates impose on their arguments, but the presuppositions also need not to conflict with what is commonly known and accepted, or with the propositions that the hearer knows to be true or acceptable. Both the reasoning and the conclusion of the reasoning need to be acceptable. As seen above, the process of reconstructing a presupposition consists of a chain of reasoning from the sentence structure; such reasoning may be grounded on three different types of principles of inference: (1) undefeasible rules of reasoning (if  $x$  is an object,  $x$  has a surface; if  $x$  studies, then  $x$  is a human being); (2) defeasible but commonly accepted propositions (if there is a party, then there are guests; if  $x$  is an adult, then  $x$  may have a car); (3) conditionals known to be false (if  $x$  studies, then  $x$  can be a dog). The same applies to the conclusions: Some propositions are definitional elements, and therefore true; others are simply accepted, while others are usually considered as unacceptable.

### 5.3 *The Speech Act of Presupposing*

By distinguishing the two dimensions of accommodation, possibility and acceptability, it is possible to distinguish between four different cases:

- i. The presupposition can be reconstructed and accepted as a background assumption.
- ii. The presupposition cannot be reconstructed.
- iii. The presupposition can be reconstructed, but the accommodation reasoning cannot be accepted.
- iv. The presupposition can be reconstructed, but it cannot be accepted.

These possibilities allow us to outline the possible felicity conditions of the speech act of presupposing, building on Austin’s and Searle and Vanderveken’s account of speech act conditions (Austin 1962, pp. 14–15; Searle and Vanderveken 1985, pp. 13–19; Macagno and Walton 2014, p. 179):

<i>Essential condition:</i>	Speaker ( <i>S</i> ) sets the presupposed proposition ( <i>pp</i> ) as a condition of the felicity of his speech act ( <i>SA</i> ); if Hearer ( <i>H</i> ) does not accept <i>pp</i> , <i>SA</i> will be void
<i>Propositional condition:</i>	<i>pp</i> is a proposition/fact/value/role that can be reconstructed by <i>H</i>
<i>Preparatory condition:</i>	<i>S</i> can presume that <i>H</i> can reconstruct and accept <i>pp</i>
<i>Sincerity condition:</i>	<i>S</i> believes that <i>pp</i> ; <i>S</i> believes that <i>H</i> can reconstruct and know or accept <i>pp</i>

This speech act, having a direction of fit from world (of the hearer) to words (of the speaker), is aimed at setting what the hearer needs to accept for the dialogue to continue. The possibility of reconstructing the presupposition is set as a propositional condition: *H* needs to be able to draw *pp* from the linguistic and pragmatic elements provided. The acceptability of the presupposition is expressed by both the preparatory and the sincerity condition. The sincerity condition expresses the conditions set out in the tradition of pragmatic presupposition as essential, while the preparatory condition, expressed in terms of presumption, is aimed at bridging the gap between the speaker's and hearer's mind from an epistemic and argumentative perspective, without resorting to the psychological notion of belief (Macagno and Walton 2014, Chap. 5).

This treatment of presupposition as a speech act of a kind can explain also the particular types of presupposition such as the Napoleon and Caesar cases mentioned above. In these cases, the speaker can presume (and believe) that the hearer can reconstruct the presuppositions; but at the same time, he presumes (and believes) that he cannot accept them. Ducrot described this phenomenon as a form of connotation, in which the utterance becomes a sign aimed at communicating the conditions of its use (see Ducrot 1968, p. 44). Interpreting this concept of connotation within the theory of speech acts, it is possible to analyze this particular use of presupposition as an indirect speech act, where the act setting out the conditions of a move needs to be interpreted as a type of assertive (Hickey 1993, p. 107).

The foundations and the dimensions of the speech act of presupposition raise another important problem, the *reasonableness* of speaker's presupposition. In our epistemological analysis, we have only considered a sentence as a fact, and not as an act. If we analyze presuppositions as acts performed by a speaker, we need to find an answer to the crucial question, why and how can a speaker presuppose a proposition? Stalnaker, in his first definition, mentioned above, explained speaker's presuppositions in terms of belief of knowledge. However, such an approach cannot explain why in some cases presupposing is reasonable, while in others it is absurd, manipulative, or ridiculous. A possible alternative can be developed from the analysis of presuppositions from an argumentative perspective. Instead of considering the concept of belief of the other party's knowledge as the foundation of speaker's presuppositions, we can conceive them as the outcome of a process of reasoning. On this perspective, the speaker can presuppose what it is reasonable to be considered as known: The reasonableness of presupposing depends on the reason supporting the fact that a premise *can* be shared.

## 6 Presuming Knowledge: Accommodation and Presumptive Reasoning

The conditions of the speech act of presupposition include two essential elements: The possibility of presupposing, which is grounded on the linguistic information provided, and the hearer's background knowledge, and its acceptability. These conditions present accommodation as a reasoning process that needs to be evaluated according to the hearer's knowledge. However, this account seems to fail to explain the crucial gap between the hearer's and the speaker's knowledge. How can the speaker predict that the hearer can reconstruct and accept a proposition? A possible answer lies in the preparatory condition, setting out that the speaker can *presume* that *H* can reconstruct and accept *pp*. This concept, partially hinted at by Strawson's presumption of knowledge (Strawson 1971, pp. 58–59; Kempson 1975, pp. 166–167), shifts the traditional psychological explanation onto an epistemic level. The speaker's *beliefs* of the hearer's acceptance or knowledge are replaced by a process of reasoning grounded on plausible premises, and presumptive reasoning. On this perspective, the hearer's possibility and acceptability of reconstructing a presupposition correspond to the speaker's possibility and reasonableness of presupposing. From the speaker's perspective, the fulfillment of the conditions of the speech act of presupposing depends on presumptive reasoning. In order to presuppose a proposition *pp*, the speaker presumes that the hearer knows or accepts *pp*. The epistemic presumption of knowledge or acceptance becomes the requirement for the linguistic act of setting the conditions of a move. In order to explain this reasoning process, it is necessary to introduce presumptive reasoning and the speech act of presumption.

### 6.1 *Presuppositions as Presumptive Reasoning*

Presupposition involves essentially a gap of knowledge, as the speaker cannot know the hearer's beliefs or values, or what he holds to be true. He can only conclude defeasibly (see Simons 2013) that he holds such knowledge, beliefs, values based on a form of guess, a pattern of reasoning in conditions of lack of knowledge that is called presumptive reasoning. Presumption can be considered as an inference with three components (Ullman-Margalit 1983, p. 147): (1) the presumption-raising fact in a particular case at issue, (2) the presumption formula, a defeasible rule that sanctions the passage from the presumed fact to the conclusion, (3) the conclusion is a proposition that is presumed to be true on the basis of (1) and (2). Rescher outlined the structure of this type of defeasible inference as follows (Rescher 2006, p. 33):



- Premise 1: *P* (the proposition representing the presumption) obtains whenever the condition *C* obtains unless and until the standard default proviso *D* (to the effect that countervailing evidence is at hand) obtains (Rule).
- Premise 2: Condition *C* obtains (Fact).
- Premise 3: Proviso *D* does not obtain (Exception).
- Conclusion: *P* obtains.

Premise 1 expresses the essential element of this pattern of reasoning, namely the rational principle supporting the conclusion (Ullman-Margalit 1983, p. 147), which “may be grounded on general experience or probability of any kind; or merely on policy and convenience” (Thayer 1898, p. 314).

Presuppositions can be based on four types of presumptions. Presumptions of the first type (Level 0—pragmatic presumptions) concern the pragmatic purpose of a speech act, connecting for instance an illocutionary force (assertion) with an intention (informing). The second type (Level 1—linguistic) refers to presumptions related to the knowledge of linguistic (or rather semantic–ontological) items and structure (called semantic presumptions). For instance, dictionary or shared meanings of lexical items are presumed to be known by the speakers of a language. Other presumptions (Level 2—factual, encyclopedic) are about encyclopedic knowledge, such as facts, common connection between events, or behaviors and habits. Finally, the third kind of presumptions includes information shared by the interlocutors, such as shared values or interests (Level 3). The levels of presumptions can be represented as given in Fig. 2.

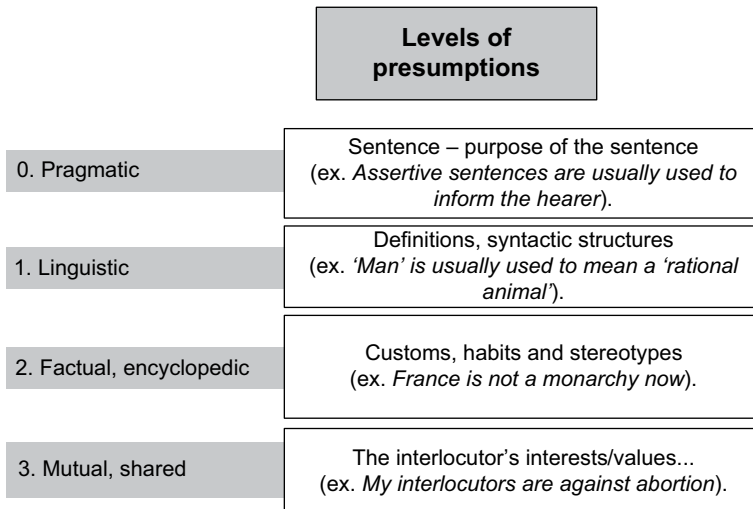


Fig. 2 Levels of presumptions

This analysis of presuppositions in terms of presumptive reasoning allows one to analyze presuppositional failures and the process of accommodation in terms of presumptive contradictions and possible resolutions of contradictory presumptive conclusions. For instance, we analyze the aforementioned sentence “Bob was at the party too” uttered in a context in which the hearer does not know who Bob is as follows:

Premise 1	<i>P (the Hearer is interested in the subject matter of a statement) obtains whenever the condition C (the Hearer is acquainted with the person the Speaker is talking about) obtains unless and until the standard default proviso D (he cannot remember him, etc.) obtains. (Rule)</i>
Premise 2	<i>Condition C (the Hearer is acquainted with Bob) CANNOT obtain (Speaker knows that Hearer does not know Bob, and people that do not know each other are presumed to continue to be strangers). (Fact)</i>
Premise 3	<i>Proviso D (the Hearer has problems of memory) does not obtain. (Exception)</i>
Conclusion	<i>P (the Hearer is interested in Bob) OBTAINS</i>

In this case, there is a conflict between a linguistic presumption (Level 1), namely, that the interlocutor knows the entity acting as a subject in the sentence, and a mutual one (Level 3), as the interlocutor cannot be presumed to be acquainted with Bob. The various levels of presumptions correspond to different levels at which presupposition can fail. We can take into consideration the other cases mentioned in Sect. 6:

3. My dog got an A in Math.
4. I have to pick up my Martian friend at the Voodoo club.
5. Bob is tall. Therefore he is really rich.

In 3, the speaker presumes at a semantic level (Level 1) that the subject (the dog) can learn Math, but at the same time he cannot presume (Level 2) that dogs can read or study. Similarly, in 4, the speaker linguistically presupposes (Level 1) that the Martians exist, but he cannot factually presume that Martians exist (Level 2). Finally, in 5, the clash is between two presumptions, one triggered by the semantic stricture of “therefore,” namely that tallness is a reason for a person’s fortune (Level 1), and a commonly known habit (Level 2) that tallness cannot be presumed to be a reason for being rich. Depending on the type of presumptive clash, the type of unreasonableness varies, resulting in impossible or unacceptable (to different extents) presuppositions. Evaluating the speaker’s reasoning allows one to understand the grounds of his unreasonableness, and to correct or challenge his act of presupposing by pointing out the premises that cannot be accepted.

## 6.2 The Dialectical Effects of Presuming Knowledge

The analysis of speaker’s presuppositions as the outcome of the speaker’s presumptive reasoning can help understand the effects of presupposition. From a dialectical

point of view, a presupposition carries the effects of a presumption. The hearer becomes committed to it, unless he challenges and rejects it (Walton 1993, 1999, p. 380; Hickey 1993, p. 108). The hearer needs to fulfill the burden of rebutting the epistemic presumption, which can be easily done by providing information about his own knowledge. Such positive evidence is often much stronger than the defaultive presumptive reasoning. However, the force of presupposing lies in a different effect of this act. As Kauffeld noticed, ordinary presumptions place on the interlocutor a specific burden, the “risk of resentment, criticism, reprobation, loss of esteem” in the event he or she does not accept a presumptive conclusion (Kauffeld 1998, p. 264). For instance, the risk of negative judgment is often associated with presumptions of knowledge or interest. In the cases above, the presuppositions were clearly conflicting with common knowledge. However, the effect of potential resentment can be understood from the example below. In this excerpt from Manzoni’s *I promessi sposi*, Father Cristoforo, in his earlier life a gentleman who became a friar after killing a man in self-defense, is invited by a powerful lord, Don Rodrigo, to judge a controversy between two guests on violence against messengers (Manzoni 2011):

“With your leave, gentlemen,” interrupted Don Rodrigo, who was afraid of the question being carried too far, “we will refer it to Father Cristoforo, and abide by his sentence.” [...] “But, from what I have heard,” said the Father, “these are matters I know nothing of.” “As usual, the modest excuses of the Fathers,” said Don Rodrigo; “but you shall not get off so easily. Come, now, *we know well enough* you did not come into the world with a cowl on your head, and *that you are no stranger to its ways*. See here; this is the question...”

Don Rodrigo presupposes the fact that Father Cristoforo knows the ways of the world pretty well and, in particular, acts of violence. Such a presupposition would be hardly acceptable by Father Cristoforo. However, the burden of rejecting is increased by the fact that it is presented as shared by everybody. Often, definitions and facts are presupposed even though not shared; however, the presumptive reasoning presents them as accepted by everybody, and the possibility of challenging them is hindered by the shame of being unaware of what everyone knows.

## 7 Accommodation as Reasoning from Best Explanation

A presuppositional failure can be accommodated by discarding one of the clashing presumptions and reconstructing the unshared presupposition by finding the best possible explanation (Macagno 2012). For instance, in case 2 above,

2. I can’t come to the meeting—I have to pick up my cat at the veterinarian

it is possible to find the best possible explanation on the basis of presumptions concerning ordinary habits. The process of reconstruction can be represented as in figure 3 (see Fig. 3).

In this case, the presupposition can be reasonably reconstructed, as it is possible to find a possible explanation. The clashing presumptions made by the speaker are of a linguistic nature (the topic of a sentence is presupposed to be shared) and

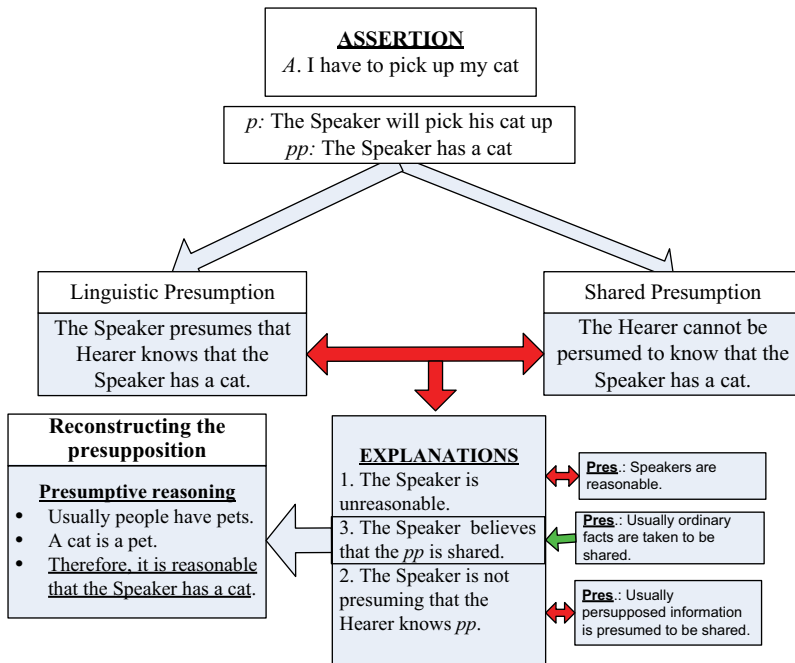


Fig. 3 Reconstructing presuppositions—best explanation

mutual (the speaker never informed the hearer that he owns a cat, and the hearer cannot be presumed to know it). However, this apparent unreasonableness can be explained by taking into account the possible explanations of the speaker’s contradictory presumptive lines of reasoning. The hearer can explain speaker’s behavior by discarding the weakest presumption, namely that the hearer cannot be presumed to share the presupposed piece of information. He can explain this rejection of a shared presumption based on another, factual, presumption, namely that people usually have pets. For this reason, the hearer can be presumed to be able to retrieve the piece of information taken for granted based on a shared principle of presumption. By contrast, in the aforementioned cases, 3, 4, and 5, it is impossible to explain that the speaker is presuming that the presupposed information is shared, and for this reason, the assertion is potentially infelicitous.

A presuppositional failure can lead to a more complex process of explanation, in which the communicative intention is reconstructed in order to avoid a communicative failure. In performing a speech act, the speaker acts on the basis of a conflict of presumptions that cannot be solved by resorting to another presumption, as depicted in 2. Instead, the outcome of this clash is an apparent communicative failure. For instance, we consider the following cases:

- 6. I will park my Bentley and I will come to your place.
- 7. Next month I will be moving to my boyfriend’s place.

These assertions, made in a context in which the hearer does not know that the speaker owns a Bentley or has a boyfriend, can be considered as a kind of indirect speech acts (Ducret 1966, p. 42), where a conflict of presumptions is solved by rejecting a linguistic presumption that affects the whole presumptive pragmatic interpretation of the utterance (the speaker intends to inform the hearer of the explicit content of his assertion—the “*posé*”), while maintaining the shared presumption. We represent the process of reconstructing the failing presupposition as given in Fig. 4.

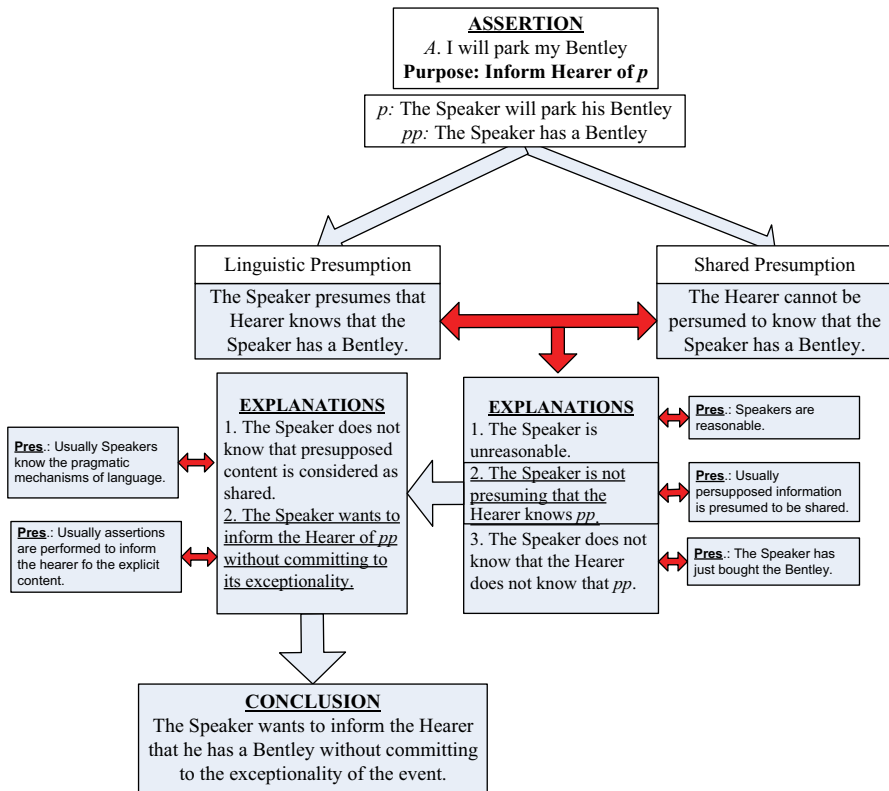


Fig. 4 Accommodation as best explanation

Here, the conflict of presumptions cannot be solved by discarding the apparently weaker one, namely the shared presumption. The speaker’s owning of a Bentley cannot be presumed to be shared by the hearer (shared level), nor are expensive cars presumed to be owned by everyone (factual level). For this reason, the only possibility is to reject the pragmatic presumption, which amounts to interpret the utterance differently from its ordinary and presumptive meaning (for the interplay between the sentence level and the interpretation of the illocutionary force of a speech act, see Capone 2005). The topic is not presumed to be shared; instead, it becomes part of the informative content of the utterance. This explanatory process leads to a

re-interpretation of the purpose of the speech act: The speaker intends to inform the hearer of a state of affairs without committing to its exceptionality.

A presuppositional failure can lead also to the re-interpretation of the explicit meaning of an utterance. A conflict of presumptions can be resolved by re-interpreting the propositional meaning of the content of the speech act, such as in the following famous case from Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* (Carroll 2010, p. 55):

“So here’s a question for you. How old did you say you were?”

Alice made a short calculation, and said “Seven years and six months.”

“Wrong!” Humpty Dumpty exclaimed triumphantly. “You never said a word like it!”

“I thought you meant ‘How old *are* you?’” Alice explained.

“If I’d meant that, I’d have said it,” said Humpty Dumpty.

Humpty Dumpty could not be presumed not to know that he never asked Alice her age. For this reason, he could not presume that Alice knew that she told Humpty Dumpty her age before. Alice solves this unreasonableness by reconstructing the explicit presumptive meaning of the interrogative act by intending it as a question requesting Alice’s age. Unfortunately, for Alice, Humpty Dumpty cannot be presumed to be reasonable overall, and her tentative to avoid a communicative breach failed. After all, the reasonableness of the interlocutor is just a presumption, the strongest one in communication, but still a presumption subject to default.

## 8 Conclusion

Presuppositions can be conceived as implicit speech acts, triggered at the level of the sentence, the relation between sentences, and discourse. Presuppositions are triggered by linguistic items and structures and by the pragmatic purpose of the utterance, and constitute the conditions of a possible continuation of a dialogue. Presuppositions are pragmatically considered as the conditions of the felicity of a speech act, or discourse move. However, the decision of setting the conditions of a move, which the hearer needs to accept in order to continue the dialogue, can be thought of as a speech act of a kind. The act of presupposing depends on specific conditions, and, in particular, on the possibility of the hearer to reconstruct and accept the propositional content. For this reason, the pragmatic conditions lead to problems that fall apparently into the domain of psychology: How can the speaker know that the hearer can reconstruct and accept a presupposition?

The solution that is presented in this chapter is based on presumptive reasoning. Instead of analyzing presuppositions in terms of mental states, it is possible to conceive them as the conclusion of reasoning in lack of evidence. The speaker can only reason and act *in ignorance* of the interlocutor’s knowledge. He advances a tentative conclusion about what the hearer may accept, hold, or know based on factual, linguistic, and epistemic rules of presumption. Such reasoning is defeasible, and can be reasonable or unreasonable, depending on the nature of the premises it is grounded on. For this reason, the act of presupposing can be assessed and challenged by evaluating and rejecting the premises on which it is based. The idea of presumptive

reasoning as the basis of the act of presupposing can also account for the dialogical effects of presuppositions. Just like presumptions carry a burden of proof, presuppositions have the effect of committing the hearer unless he rejects them. However, presuppositions carry also another type of burden, the pretense of proceeding from what everybody knows. For this reason, sometimes the act of presupposing places on the interlocutor also a different burden, the risk of resentment or criticism.

The analysis of presupposition in terms of the patterns of the presumptive reasoning underlying them allows one to investigate the process of accommodation as a type of reasoning from best explanation, in which one of the contradictory presumptive principles needs to be discarded. The rejection of one of the terms of the contradiction leads to a process of reinterpretation, or rather of further explanation. This explanation of the speaker's intention can result in reinterpreting the whole pragmatic purpose of the utterance, leading to considering an apparently infelicitous utterance an indirect speech act.

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# Adpositions, Deixis, and Anti-Deixis

Alan Reed Libert

**Abstract** In this chapter, I look at the role of adpositions in deixis, specifically in spatial and temporal deixis. There may be more controversy with respect to this word class than with, e.g., demonstratives: there are some who would say that deictic adpositions do not exist (at least in a particular language), and among those who say that they do exist, there may be disagreement as to which adpositions are deictic. After examining several spatial adpositions, I discuss anti-deixis; some adpositions in some contexts appear to be anti-deictic, that is, they point to locations which are not the same as that of the speech situation (which is different from being far from the speech situation, i.e., distal). I then discuss some temporal adpositions which may be deictic or anti-deictic. On closer examination, it turns out that the anti-deictic effects observed may not always be due to the adpositions involved. In any case, anti-deixis is a complex phenomenon worth exploring further.

**Keywords** Inferential pragmatics · Adpositions · Deixis · Anti-deixis

## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The pragmatics of adpositions has been a less popular topic than their syntax or semantics, but it has not been entirely ignored. One part of this subject is deixis and adpositions; although previous authors have written about it, they have not treated it comprehensively. This chapter represents an attempt at a fuller treatment, and

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the first step towards a general treatment of adpositional pragmatics.<sup>2</sup> My thinking about adpositional deixis led me to another topic, *anti-deixis*, and it will also be a focus of this chapter, although sometimes anti-deictic effects may not be due to adpositions themselves; thus, for a while, we will move away from adpositional matters. It seems to me that the main question of an investigation into deixis and adpositions is which adpositions are deictic, or which uses of them are deictic (in cases where adpositions have several meanings, a common situation).

## 1.1 Definitions of Deixis

To be able to determine whether an adposition, or a use of it, is deictic, we need a definition of *deixis*, and many existing definitions are not entirely clear, in particular, with respect to how dependent on extralinguistic context an item must be to be considered deictic. It is not my purpose to (re-)define deixis, nor even to give a full survey of definitions by others, but if we look at several definitions we may get an idea of the difficulties involved when dealing with the question of which adpositions (if any) are deictic. Consider the following extract from the entry for *deixis, deictic expressions* in Cruse (2006, p. 44):

Usage of the term “deixis” is variable, but most typically it designates referring expressions which indicate the location of the referents along certain dimensions, using the speaker (and time and place of speaking) as a reference point or “deictic centre”

On the following page he says, “Some scholars apply the term *deixis* to any expression which specifies a location, whether or not the specification is egocentric (e.g., *on the table, in London*).” Cruse does not name any of these scholars,<sup>3</sup> but it seems to me that it is not helpful to use *deixis* in this way; one could simply call such items *locational terms* or *locative terms*. On the other hand, we should remove any mention of “referring expressions” from statements such as the above extract, since adpositions (Ps) are not referring expressions, nor in general are the adposition phrases (PPs) which they head (the noun phrases (NPs) or determiner phrases (DPs) which they govern are), nor are verbs for that matter (and on p. 45 Cruse mentions the possibility of some motion verbs being regarded as deictic).

<sup>2</sup> The same situation holds with respect to adpositions and conversational implicatures; the topic has been discussed, but not fully, and I hope to deal with it in the future.

<sup>3</sup> Van Engelenhoven may have a similar notion of deixis; he states (2011, p. 247), “By deixis... we mean here all cues provided by a language that localize a speech event and its participants in space and time. By contrast, reference is based on the privative distinction ‘related to the deictic center (*origo*)’/‘not related to the deictic center’.” A difference between these “some scholars” and van Engelenhoven is that the former (if Cruse’s description of their views is accurate) may consider only spatial locations to be deictic, while the latter sees both spatial and temporal locations as deictic. Both would probably view many or most adpositions as deictic items, since a large proportion of adpositions have spatial meanings. However, for van Engelenhoven spatial adpositions would only be deictic when they “localize a speech event”, while for the “some scholars” they would always be deictic.

Lyons (1977, p. 636) says:

The term “deixis”...is now used in linguistics to refer to the function of personal and demonstrative pronouns, of tense and of a variety of other grammatical and lexical features which relate utterances to the spatio-temporal coordinates of the act of utterance.

What is not clear from such definitions is what proportion (if this could even be measured) of the locational meaning of spatial terms must depend on the extralinguistic context, i.e., the “spatio-temporal coordinates of the act of utterance.”

Anderson and Keenan (1985, p. 259) express their conception of deixis as follows: “we consider as deictic expressions (or deictics for short) those linguistic elements whose interpretation in simple sentences makes essential reference to properties of the extralinguistic context of the utterance in which they occur.” The problem here is how one determines what counts as “essential reference.” There is also a problem with their next sentence (ibid.): “Given the sentence *John loves me*, for example, we cannot tell who is being loved unless we know who is uttering the sentence.” This is true, but in the case of the sentence *John loves Mary*, we also “cannot tell who is being loved” unless we know something about the context of utterance (which could be linguistic context). The number of entities to whom *Mary* could properly refer is far smaller than the number of those to whom *me* could refer, but it would still be in the hundreds of thousands or millions.<sup>4</sup>

Levinson (2003, p. 423) may be on the way to a view in which there is a spectrum of deicticity rather than a binary distinction between deictic and non-deictic items:

Expressions whose reference or extension is systematically determined by aspects of the speech situation (words like *I*, *you*, *now*, *this*, and *here*) are called *deictic* or *indexical* terms. Sometimes they denote aspects of the speech situation itself (as with *I*), but sometimes what they denote is only partially determined by reference to the speech situation (as in *local pub*, *long ago*, *next year*, *distant planet*, *the late president*).

I say this because of his words “partially determined.”

Levinson (2004, pp. 101–102) states that “there is a cline of referring expressions” in terms of “semantic deficiency”, e.g., from *he* to *the second President* to *be the son of a President* and thus “semantic deficiency cannot be the only defining

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<sup>4</sup> A reviewer is not persuaded by my argument here (and presumably would also not be persuaded by my James William Ivens example later in this section), saying:

the meaning of *me* and *Mary* is not of the same type. Of course, the reference of *Mary* is context dependent, but not its meaning, as well as the reference of *me* is contextual. But its meaning includes a reference to the speaker. The meaning of a proper name (it is a rigid designator) cannot be said contextually dependent.

However, Fludernik (1991, p. 199) says, “proper names...are deictics at least for Todorov and Ducrot (1972, p. 322), as well as for several philosophers, among them Donnellan (1971) and Searle (1969, 1979)” (unlike for Jakobson); and Zouhar (2005, p. 355) states, “it is quite widespread today to take proper names as a sort of indexical expressions [sic]”, although he rejects this view. Thus, the position that I have taken in this paragraph does not appear to be out of line with the thinking of some analysts, although there is also disagreement with it.

characteristic of indexicality” (ibid., p. 101).<sup>5</sup> I might come to a somewhat different conclusion: There is a cline between deictic and non-deictic items (and note again that we cannot really talk about referring expressions, since some (putative) deictic words, e.g., *to come* and *behind*, do not refer in the strict sense). In other words, there is no sharp boundary between what is deictic and what is not deictic, as even phrases with apparently precise reference still depend on context.

Consider the name *James William Ivens*. This is the name of my grandfather, but also of my great-grandfather, my great-great-grandfather, and my great-great-great-grandfather. There is, or was, also a James William Ivens in Canada, and another James William Ivens in the UK. Thus, in looking at historical documents, newspapers, etc., one cannot be certain which James William Ivens is being referred to, unless they are from a time when only one of them was alive (which from a practical point of view is annoying when working on genealogy). My ancestors did use *Jr.* and *Sr.*, which create even more precise terms, e.g., *James William Ivens, Sr.*, but even such terms cannot be fully understood unless we know the time at which they were used: When my great-great-great-grandfather was alive, my great-great-grandfather may have put *Jr.* after his name; but after the death of the former, he may have dropped it; after his father had died and his son of the same name had been born, he may have taken on the *Sr.* himself. I do not think that we would want to consider *James William Ivens, Sr.* a deictic term, since *deictic* would be so broad as to be meaningless, but where do we draw the line between deictic and non-deictic terms? Can we even draw such a line?

In any case, according to Hanks (2011, p. 317), there are no linguistic items which contain only deictic information:

...actual deictic forms and arrays always combine sheer indexical functions with other kinds of information (indexical, iconic or symbolic). If one maintains the more austere philosophical definition of deixis as pure indexicality, we are led to conclude that natural language systems are always impure blends between indexical and non-indexical functions.

Sidnell (2009, pp. 114–115) is critical of the statement by Anderson and Keenan quoted above, as well as of Levinson’s (1994, p. 853) statement that “The term ‘deixis’...refers to a particular way in which the interpretation of certain linguistic expressions (‘deictics’ or ‘indexicals’) is dependent on the context in which they are produced or interpreted.” Sidnell says:

<sup>5</sup> Levinson also (ibid., p. 105) says, “deictics may contain both descriptive properties and contextual variables in the one expression”; among his examples are *today* and *nearby*. In other words, a deictic item does not have to depend totally on context for its interpretation. The question is, as I have already mentioned, what percentage of the interpretation must involve extralinguistic context. I do not think that there is an (easy) answer to this question. Levinson (ibid., p. 117) mentions languages which have “uphill” and “downhill” deictic items; some of the meaning of these terms is descriptive, not context-based, since we know that they involve a hill or mountain (i.e., they would not be used in a literal sense to describe location in an apartment, while *here* could be used anywhere. The same sort of remark holds for the “upstream,” “downstream,” and “across river” deictic terms of Yupik mentioned by Levinson (ibid.); even in the absence of any knowledge about the context of utterance, we know that there will be a river (stream, creek, etc.) in the vicinity of the speaker (or hearer?).

Such definitions are problematic insofar as a great many, if not all, “linguistic expressions” or “linguistic elements” depend for their interpretation on some properties of the extralinguistic context. Indeed Levinson writes: “just about any referring expression can be used deictically” (2004, p. 101). [...] In order to curtail the infinite expansion of the class of deictics, we need to impose definitional restrictions based on the formal properties (semantic, morphological and morphosyntactic) of particular languages. It is only through the use of such criteria that we are able to arrive at the more or less closed functional categories of person, space, time, discourse and social deixis. Crosslinguistically, the degree of “closedness” of these categories is relative...

However, he does not seem to make any proposals for the criteria, and since he does not discuss adpositions, even if he did make such proposals, the criteria might not be applicable to adpositions.

We have seen that defining deixis is not a simple matter. The issue will come up when discussing deixis in general, but is perhaps more relevant when considering whether some adpositions are deictic, since they clearly contain some descriptive (i.e., non-indexical) information. If we talk about a spectrum of deicticity, even items at the deictic end will not be totally deictic, as we saw in the quotation from Hanks (2011) above. On the other hand, as shown by my *James William Ivens* example, all linguistic items may be at least slightly dependent on context for their interpretation.

Although at this point I do not have any answers to the question of how to tell when an adposition is deictic, some ideas on this may come up through the following discussion of deixis and adpositions.

## 1.2 Exclusions

In this section, I will bring up some phenomena related to adpositional deixis, or perhaps involving it, which I will not discuss in the body of the chapter.

We need to distinguish between PPs containing deictic Ps and PPs which are deictic but not because of the Ps which they contain, e.g., *in this room*. This point is made by Cervoni (1991, p. 241) with respect to the example *à la gare* ‘at the train station’: “L’élément que l’on peut considérer comme jouant un rôle déictique n’est pas la préposition, mais l’article défini” (‘The element which one can consider to be playing a deictic role is not the preposition, but the definite article’). I will not discuss the latter kind of PP here.

I am not concerned with discourse deixis, anaphoricity, or social deixis. I will not deal with adverbs that might be seen as intransitive Ps, e.g., *up in he went up*, although they may be deictic for the same reason as their transitive counterparts are, if the latter exist (e.g., *up in he went up the stairs*). I will also not discuss (putative) adpositions which bear person marking, e.g., Turkish *aramızda* ‘in between us’ (Lewis 1988, p. 89; *-mız-* is the first-person plural suffix); these clearly can be deictic, but not because of the core adpositional part of their meaning.

The same applies to adpositions bearing tense marking. Consider first the following Malagasy example:

- (1) n-anoratra t-aminny pensily  
 PST-write PST-with pencil  
 'He wrote with a pencil' (Hagège 2010, p. 174, originally from Dez 1980, Vol. I, p. 203)

According to Hagège (*ibid.*), this example involves “a kind of adpositional tense agreement.” If this is the case, then the tense marking in the adposition is not part of its basic meaning, although it is deictic.

Let us now look at a case where the tense marking seems more intrinsic to the adposition. Haspelmath (1997, p. 44) says of Maori, “Its spatial prepositions... have a meaning component of temporal deixis. Past spatial location is marked by *i*, present location by *kei*, and future location is marked by *kei/hei/ko*.” He gives (*ibid.*, p. 45) the following examples, originally from Bauer (1993, p. 305):

- (2a) I te kura ia.  
 at.PST the school he/she  
 ‘She was at school.’
- (2b) Kei te kura ia.  
 at.PRES the school he/she  
 ‘She is at school.’
- (2c) Kei/hei/ko te kura ia.  
 at.FUT the school he/she  
 ‘She will be at school.’

However, it is not clear whether the words in question are adpositions; Haspelmath (1997, p. 44) says, “This differentiation [of location in the past, present, and future] is found only in nonverbal sentences where the prepositional phrase is the predicate.” Therefore, they might be “locational verbs” (*ibid.*, p. 45), e.g., *i* might mean ‘was at.’

In fact, the situation is more complex, because *i* and *kei*, along with two other words, also distinguish among past, present, and future location in time, as shown by the following examples (*ibid.*, p. 44, originally from Bauer 1993, p. 337):

- (3a) I te Mane, ka haere atu raatou ki Rotorua.  
 at.PST the Monday TNS move away they to Rotorua  
 ‘On Monday, they went to Rotorua.’
- (3b) A te Raatapu, ka hoki ia ki te kaainga.  
 at.FUT the Sunday TNS return he/she to the home  
 ‘She will return home on Sunday.’

Here the choice of a word meaning ‘on’ (with days of the week) apparently depends on the location in time of the event relative to the moment of speaking, and it seems less likely that *i* and *a* are locational verbs. They contain temporal deictic meaning, but it is not clear to me whether we can call them deictic adpositions. For example, one might argue that they involve suppletive-tensed variations of a preposition, and just as we would not say that, e.g., *am* and *was* are deictic verbs (although they are different tense forms and thus deictic on that account), *i* and *a* are simply irregular allomorphs of the same adposition; again the deictic part of these adpositions may not, in fact, be an intrinsic part of their meaning. I am far from certain of this, but for the present I will not further discuss the apparently tensed adpositions of Maori (or other languages), following Haspelmath, who says (1997, p. 45), “I must leave the deeper analysis of these fascinating facts to the specialists of Maori.”

Finally, I will not treat the phenomenon called “deixis agreement” by Hagège (2010, p. 175). Below are his (*ibid.*) examples of this, from Wolof:

(4a) c-i        néeg b-i  
       in-PROX from the-PROX  
       ‘in the room (close to me)’

(4b) c-a        néeg b-a  
       in-DIST room the-DIST  
       ‘in the room (far from me)’

These examples originally come from Robert (2006, p. 158), although she does not use the term *deixis agreement* in relation to them; she says (*ibid.*), “the localizing preposition (*ci/ca*) is employed with these affixes<sup>6</sup> and is sensitive to the indication of proximity/distance relative to the speaker.” I do not see this phenomenon as very relevant to the present chapter because again the deixis involved is not the basic meaning of the adposition (root) itself.

## 2 Spatial Deixis and Adpositions

In this section, I will discuss and comment on previous writing about spatial adpositions and deixis, and I will argue for adding slightly to the set of adpositions considered to be deictic in their spatial sense.

### 2.1 Projective Adpositions

One might think that there was not much new to say on deixis and adpositions, since many authors have already worked on this topic,<sup>7</sup> including Retz-Schmidt (1988),

<sup>6</sup> i.e., the “deictic suffixes” (*ibid.*, p. 157).

<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, Anderson and Keenan (1985 p. 279) say that “Spatial deictic notions are expressed in a variety of parts of speech,” but do not bring up adpositions as one of those parts of speech; they do mention locative adverbs, demonstrative adjectives and pronouns, “presentatives” (e.g., *voici* “here is” in French), “bound verbal morphology”, and verb roots. Similarly, in their section “Temporal deixis in the lexicon” (p. 300), they cite *now*, *today*, etc., but do not bring up adpositions, though they say that there are many words which involve temporal deixis. Perhaps one of the reasons that adpositions are not considered by some authors to be among deictic items is that they do not refer, unlike *me* or *today*, and deixis is sometimes thought to be connected with reference (as we saw in Sect. 1.1. above). One might say that deictic adpositions, if they exist, enable deictic reference, although they themselves do not refer (or in the case of anti-deixis, they prevent deictic reference).

Writing about Spanish, Hottenroth (1982) may not accept the idea that some adpositions are deictic, or at least she is not willing to commit herself to it. Speaking of “those prepositions which organize the space around a given object as in *to the right of*, *to the left of*, *above*, *below*, *in front of*, *behind*, etc.” (p. 138) she says, “Such prepositions are sometimes treated as part of the deictic system (for example, Vernay (197[4]))” (pp. 138–139). If Hottenroth strongly believed that the prepositions in question were deictic, she would not have used the words “are sometimes treated as.” Andre et al. (1987) have the same sort of view as Vernay; according to them (p. 380), “the four basic relations, *in front of*, *to the left of*, *to the right of*, and *behind*” have “intrinsic and deictic



who summarizes some of the relevant questions and writings on them. However, there is a point on which I disagree with her: on p. 97, she says, “only the projective prepositions allow intrinsic, deictic, and extrinsic use.”<sup>8</sup> It seems to me that at least several other adpositions can be deictic, and this will be one of the main issues of the present chapter.

I will first explain the terminology which Retz-Schmidt uses. *Projective prepositions* are a subset of *relational prepositions*, which apparently, in turn, are a subset of spatial prepositions. Relational prepositions “are used in order to describe the location of one object in relation to another” (Retz-Schmidt 1988, p. 95); projective prepositions, e.g., *behind*, “convey information about the direction in which one object is located with respect to the other” (ibid.).<sup>9</sup> *Near*, *in*, and *at* are not projective prepositions; they “only refer to topological relations between the objects” (ibid.). As we shall see, *at* is arguably deictic in one of its uses, and I will discuss the possibility of *near* being deictic below.

The types of uses which projective prepositions have are described as follows by Retz-Schmidt (ibid.):

Projective prepositions can be used in different ways. For example, if we say, “The ball is in front of the car,” it can mean that we want to locate the ball in relation to the car from the point of view of the speaker, with respect to the orientation of the car itself, or with respect to the actual direction of the motion of the car. In the first case, I speak of deictic use; in the second case, of intrinsic use; and in the third case, of extrinsic use.

For a PP to involve intrinsic use, the object of the P, in this case *the car*, must have “an intrinsic orientation” (ibid.); everyone will agree that a car has a front and will agree on where it is. This is also true of a church, but not of a water tower. However, someone could be standing by what everyone will agree is a side of the car, and if that person is standing between the speaker and the car, and if the speaker is facing the car, the speaker could say that the person is in front of the car; this would be a deictic use of *in front of*. According to Retz-Schmidt (ibid., p. 97), “most authors” are of the opinion that *in front of*, *behind*, *to the right of*, and *to the left of* are projective prepositions, and thus can occur in a deictic use. As we have seen (note 8), she admits that there is no universal consensus on the membership of the set of potentially deictic adpositions; other prepositions (or items with a similar type of meaning) which she says have been considered to belong to it are *beside*, *over*, *under*, *on*

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uses.” Green (1992a, p. 128) explicitly denies the possibility of deictic prepositions, saying, “I consider prepositions in prepositional phrases to be non-deictic, as they relate to an internal system in the way that say, aspect relates to tense.” However, the example, which he is discussing in this paragraph, is *above the car*; perhaps he did not consider prepositions such as *behind*.

An author who does mention adpositions among deictic items (unlike Anderson and Keenan (1985)) is Cairns (1991), who says (p. 20), “The devices used to encode deictic information in language are systems of demonstratives (in English *this/that*), prepositions and other locating expressions (*here/there; in front of/behind*), personal pronouns (*I/you*) and systems of motion verbs.”

<sup>8</sup> Retz-Schmidt herself (1988, p. 103), says, “Disagreement prevails concerning... which prepositions can be used deictically and intrinsically, in particular, whether prepositions describing spatial relations in the vertical axis can be used deictically”.

<sup>9</sup> Various authors, including Retz-Schmidt, attribute the term *projective prepositions* to Herskovits (1986), but in fact Herskovits had used it earlier, in her (1980) paper.

*the top of, on the bottom of, underneath, above, and below.* However, in her view, “For prepositions describing verticality, deictic use is not possible” (1988, p. 97).

If we now recall some of the definitions of deixis cited in Sect. 1.1, we can ask whether the prepositions brought up here would be deictic according to them. For example, do they involve “essential reference” (Anderson and Keenan 1985, p. 259) to the speech situation? It seems to me that the proportion of the meaning of *behind* which is deictic, as in *behind the tree*, is less than that of *here*. Even if we do not know where the speaker is in relation to the tree, we know that the object being located is in a place which could be described as being behind the tree in question, which would mean not far from it. If we know which tree is involved (and this is a question of the deictic use of *the*) the number of places in the universe where the object in question could be is fairly small, and far smaller than the places which *here* could refer to. This may be even clearer if we involve a proper noun, e.g., *The car is behind the Wye Oak* (a well-known tree which stood in Talbot County, Maryland); even without context, someone who encountered this sentence would have a good idea of where the car was; he only would not know which side of the tree it was on. Thus, one could say that projective adpositions, if they are deictic, are less deictic than *here* (by which I mean that their interpretation is less dependent on context) and that “essential reference” does not come into play. The same applies to the adpositions to be discussed in the next section.

On the other hand, it appears that the location of objects by PPs headed by *behind*, etc. is “systematically determined by aspects of the speech situation” (Levinson 2003, p. 423), although it is not clear to me what an unsystematic or random determination would be. Do projective adpositions “relate utterances to the spatio-temporal coordinates of the act of utterance” (Lyons 1977, p. 636)? One could say so; although what is focussed on is not the place of “the act of utterance” (unlike, e.g., in the case of *here*); the locating occurs in reference to the place of the act of utterance, and, in this sense, projective adpositions may be deictic according to Lyons’ notion of deixis. However, since the location is not generally the same as that of the act of utterance, one might rather say that projective adpositions (and other putative deictic adpositions) involve anti-deixis, a phenomenon that I will present in Sect. 3 below.

## 2.2 *Itinerative Adpositions*

The prepositions *over, across, and beyond* are rarely or never mentioned as being among the projective prepositions, but they appear to have deictic uses. Mackenzie (2003, p. 9) speaks of the “[i]tinerative use of spatial adpositions.” With such uses, “the intended location is situated on an imaginary path that leads from the deictic centre that is assumed by the speaker.” His first example involves *under*:

(5) He lives under the bridge. (ibid.)

Although this could mean that the place where the person in question resides is located under a bridge (and this is probably the most common reading), it could also

mean that “‘his’ dwelling-place is not the shelter afforded by the bridge, but some other place which can be accessed by passing under the bridge” (ibid.). Since what would generally be meant in such a case is that the place can be reached by passing under the bridge from where the speaker is, this reading may involve a deictic use of *under*. We shall now look at some other adpositions which have an itinerative reading.

Although his paper is mainly on *beyond* (which I will discuss later in this section), Mackenzie (2003, p. 10) mentions several other English prepositions which can be deictic, e.g., *over* in *The helicopter is over the hill* (this example is originally from Bennett 1975, p. 53). *Over* is not deictic when this sentence means that the helicopter is some distance above the hill, but it is deictic when it means that the helicopter is over the hill (i.e., on the other side of the hill) from the speaker. Mackenzie (ibid.) says of the latter meaning, “the helicopter is situated on the other side of the hill from the deictic centre, and may not be flying at all. In order to find its exact location, a journey ‘over the hill’ would be required; in practice, this journey is typically carried out in the imagination.”

In *Florence lives up the hill* (ibid.), *up* can be seen as deictic for the same reason: the default interpretation is that she lives up the hill from the speaker’s location, so in order to know where she lives (and perhaps which hill is involved), one has to know where the speaker is. (One can make it clearly non-deictic, e.g., *Florence lives up the hill from the pub*; ibid.). The same applies to *down*, although it seems to me that the deictic reading may not be (so strongly) the default, e.g., in *Florence lives down the hill* (which sounds odd to me), perhaps because the default location of people is not on hills or mountains, but in lower areas. However, if we use *down* in a nonliteral sense, the deictic reading is the default; e.g., in *John lives (just) down the street*, the usual interpretation is down (along) the street from where the speaker is. The same applies to a preposition not mentioned by Mackenzie, (*a*)*round* as in *It is just (a)round the corner*; the default reading is just around the corner from the speaker.

One might think that such default interpretations do not arise with all verbs; perhaps they hold only with verbs that do not involve motion. My judgment is that in its default reading *John went up/over the hill* does not mean up or over from the point of view of the speaker, but rather from the point of view of John’s starting place.

However, the matter seems more complex, as I will show with some examples from Cresswell (1978). Early in his paper, he discusses what he calls (p. 8) “the semantically most basic use of *across*,” which “makes no reference to any point of view,” as in:

(6) Arabella walks across a meadow. (ibid., p. 3)

The intended meaning here is that Arabella walks from one side of a meadow to the other, and this is not deictic. Consider now the following example:

(7) Arabella walks across a meadow from Bill. (ibid., p. 8)

This sentence has two meanings: (a) “that Arabella’s walk occupies a path along the meadow and the walk begins where Bill is,” and (b) that “Bill is on one side of the meadow looking at Arabella walking on the other side” (ibid.). In the latter reading, “it is Bill... who provides the point of view.” I would think that the speaker

could also “provide the point of view” and that (6) could conceivably have another interpretation: “Arabella is walking in a meadow, and this walking is taking place on the other side of the meadow from where I (the speaker) am.” Admittedly, this is not a very natural reading, but this may be, in part, because (6) has the simple present rather than the progressive (which would be more natural in any case), and because it contains the indefinite rather than the definite article. If we change these two features, the intended interpretation may be slightly more natural: *Arabella is walking across the meadow*. However, it still seems like an unlikely reading (at best); perhaps this is because one expects *walks/is walking* to take the PP *across the meadow* as a complement. If we prevent this, the reading in question may be possible, and may perhaps be the default reading (although, if so, the sense of it being the default reading is not strong): *Arabella is walking around across the meadow*.

Hale and Shrestha (1996, p. 404) also bring up *across*, giving deictic and non-deictic occurrences of its use:

(8a) There is a mailbox across the street from the drugstore.

(8b) There is a mailbox across the street from here.

(8c) There is a mailbox across the street.

They discuss these as follows:

In [(8a)] the reference point (or, in Langacker’s terms, the landmark) in terms of which the expression “across the street” is interpreted is “the drugstore.” There is no implicit reference to any aspect of the speech situation.<sup>10</sup> Example [(8a)] would have the same interpretation regardless of where it was spoken, and thus in this example “across the street” is used in its non-deictic sense. The landmark for “across the street” in [(8b)] is “here,” which is deictic. Example [(8b)] will be interpreted differently depending on where it is uttered by virtue of the fact that “here” has implicit reference to the place of speaking. Thus, in [(8b)] “here” is deictic, while “across the street” is not. **In [(8c)], however, “across the street” itself has implicit reference to the place of speaking, and is thus deictic.** [emphasis mine, ARL]

Even *at* can be seen as deictic in some occurrences: Herskovits (1980, p. 2) states, “In *the gas-station is at the freeway*, an implicit cross-path is assumed.” If I understand her correctly, this sentence would not be uttered if there were not some sort of access (the “implicit crosspath”) from the speaker and/or hearer’s location more or less perpendicular to the freeway. The location of this implicit path could only be known if one knew the location of the speaker and/or hearer, and thus the extralinguistic context is necessary for the understanding of a sizeable proportion of the meaning of an utterance of this sentence.

In his paper on *beyond*, Mackenzie (2003, p. 11) also speaks of a path, and a path which can involve the location of the speaker:

In practice...*beyond* is, like *up* and *down*, fundamentally associated with itinerativity; in other words, it indicates a location or destination indirectly and imprecisely, by way of invoking an imaginary path. As we have seen, itinerativity is necessarily associated with deixis, and the very form of *beyond* already betrays its connection with deixis.

<sup>10</sup> I am not sure whether I agree with this: one has to know the situation, or have common knowledge with the speaker to know which drugstore is involved. Therefore, this example could, in some contexts, be deictic due to the definite article preceding *drugstore*. One might say that *across* here can be indirectly deictic, since in some sense it depends on *the drugstore*; we cannot know which way across the street from the drugstore is if we do not know where the drugstore is.

What he means by “form” here is the fact that *beyond* contains a truncated form of *yonder*; which was a member of “the three-way deictic system characteristic of older forms of English” (ibid.), i.e., *here—there—yonder* (ibid.).

Leech (1969, p. 180) also discusses *beyond*:

In the description of locative meaning so far, it has been necessary to refer to entities [of] two kinds: objects and locations. Now a further factor is to be introduced, the POINT OF ORIENTATION. In statements such as “The cloud is beyond that hill,” the position of an object (“the cloud”) is determined by reference not only to a location (in this instance “that hill”), but to a point where in reality or imagination the speaker is standing. *Beyond* can be roughly paraphrased *on that side of* or *on the other/far side of*, and as such is in contrast to *on this side of*, which has no single prepositional equivalent in English.

While English may lack a (one-word) adposition meaning ‘on this side of,’ Latin has one, *cis*, which, like *beyond*, can be seen as deictic, as well as prepositions which can mean ‘on the other side of,’ *trans* and *ultra*. It is an interesting question why a language would have a one-word adposition for ‘on that side of’ but not one for ‘on this side of.’ Are there any languages which have the latter but not the former? Another language which (one could say) has one-word adpositions for both ‘on this side of’ and ‘on the other side of’ is Turkish:

(9a) Erzurum-dan sonra yol nasıl?

Erzurum-ABL after road how  
‘how is the road beyond Erzurum?’

(9b) göl-den beri hava güzel

lake-ABL this.side.of weather beautiful  
‘this side of the lake the weather is beautiful’ (Lewis 1988, p. 89)

Both of these postpositions also have a temporal meaning, “after” and “since,” respectively, e.g.:<sup>11</sup>

(10a) toplantı-dan sonra

meeting-ABL after  
‘after the meeting’

(10b) ağustos-tan beri

August-ABL since  
‘since August’ (ibid.)

Another way of saying (10b) is *ağustos-tan bu yana* (ibid.). Thus, *bu yana* is (arguably) another postposition meaning ‘since,’ consisting of *bu* ‘this’ and *yana*, which as a postposition on its own means ‘on the side of,’ and so is clearly deictic.

After the passage quoted above, Leech (1969, p. 180) says, “The point of observation introduces a subjective, deictic element of meaning, as is evident from the use of the words *this* and *that* in the phrases *on this side*, *on that side*.” One might claim that any adposition which can be paraphrased by a phrase containing *this* or *that* can be deictic (though perhaps not all deictic adpositions would have such a paraphrase).

Leech (1969, pp. 186–187) discusses *towards* in its “static use” (ibid., p. 186), and in some instances of this use it can be deictic, e.g. *The flower shop is towards*

<sup>11</sup> In fact, Göksel and Kerslake (2005, p. 219) say, “Postpositional phrases headed by *beri* always have temporal meaning.”

*the hospital* (ibid.), (p. 187), but not in, e.g., *He lives toward the centre of the town (from the factory)* (ibid.), if the words in parentheses are present. The former sentence can have *from here* (ibid.) at the end, i.e., *The flower shop is towards the hospital from here*, and Leech (ibid.) states, “The possibility of adding *from here* or some other phrase of that kind is a clear signal of the relevance of *towards* to the place relations we have been considering: it specifies position with respect to a point of orientation.” In addition to *towards*, other prepositions can be shown to be deictic in some of their occurrences, e.g., *past*, *over*; and *under* (which Leech discusses on p. 186), as in *He lives past the post office* (ibid., p. 186), *The station is under the bridge (from here)* (ibid.). However, I do not think that the ability to take *from here* is a necessary condition for an adposition to be deictic; *at* in the sense described above cannot take this phrase, e.g., *\*The gas station is at the freeway from here*.

### 2.3 *Near*

We have seen a range of adpositions which have been considered deictic by various authors. I shall now discuss *near*; which to my knowledge has not been listed among deictic adpositions by anyone; it is neither projective nor itinerative.<sup>12</sup> Consider the following sentences:

(11a) Baltimore is near Washington, DC.

(11b) Mars is near Jupiter.

I do not think that these sentences, or rather the propositions which they assert, can be assigned truth values, since what counts as “near” is a matter of judgment. Part of this judgment may involve how far the speaker is from the objects being mentioned.<sup>13</sup> If one were on one of Jupiter’s moons (but not necessarily between Mars and Jupiter), I do not think that it would be appropriate to utter (11b), but it might be if one were on the outer extremes of the solar system, or even further away. Similarly, if one were somewhere in Maryland, say Annapolis, (11a) might not seem appropriate, while it might be a reasonable thing to say in Europe or California. Thus, in order to know what *near* means (a yard, a mile, a light year?), we need to know the distance of the speaker (and/or hearer) from the objects being described as near each other.

<sup>12</sup> The adverb *near (by)* is arguably itinerative; in, e.g., *The park is near (by)*, which means that the park is not far following a path from the speaker (and/or hearer). No such path exists with, e.g., *The park is near the hotel*, although, of course, there is a path from the park to the hotel.

<sup>13</sup> This may be similar to, but not the same as, the kind of subjective judgment which affects many adjectives, e.g., *large*; what counts as a large city for someone from a rural area might not be considered a large city for someone from New York. I would hesitate to say that *large* is, therefore, deictic (you cannot know what *large* means until you know about the person uttering it). (However, Strässler (1982, p. 50) says, “According to Terence Moore [in a personal communication?], even adjectives such as ‘good’, ‘great,’ etc., are deictic (or quasi-deictic (his term)) in that they refer to the speaker’s beliefs and intensions.”) *Near* might be slightly different because the judgment of what counts as near does, in part, depend on a spatial issue.

I am not certain that a deictic analysis of *near* in such contexts is the correct approach, but I believe that it is worth considering. In fact, a reviewer disagrees with my analysis of this word. However, there is some experimental evidence which gives partial support to it. Colombo and Seymour (1983, pp. 85–86) say:

If the egocentric system is in some sense primary, a judgment regarding the separation of two objects should be sensitive to variations in the apparent proximity of the objects to the observer. Thus, if the subject is required to judge whether two squares are near or far relative to one another, and if the shapes, as displayed on the screen, appear large or small, this additional factor may influence the matching process in such a way that large shapes facilitate NEAR judgments but inhibit FAR judgments, and vice versa for small objects.

The results were that, “Although presentation of large squares did facilitate *near*/NEAR judgments, the converse effect of small size on *far*/FAR judgments was not observed” (ibid., p. 88).<sup>14</sup> It would thus appear that speaker distance from two objects can play a role in whether they are considered near to each other, and that what counts as, or is meant by, *near* can depend to some extent on extralinguistic context. Consider also the following remarks by Hernández et al. (1995, pp. 45–46):

What it means for A to be near B depends not only on their absolute positions (and the metric distance between them), but also on their relative sizes and shapes, the position of other objects, the frame of reference, and “what it takes to go from A to B.” With other words, distance concepts are context dependent.

If one regards *close to* and *far from* as prepositions, then they could be deictic as well (although the deictic status of the latter is less certain, given the results from Colombo and Seymour; 1983). One of the questions is whether the proportion of the meaning which seems to be context-dependent in such items is large enough to qualify them as deictic terms; this goes back to the question of determining the limits of the class of deictic items, as discussed in Sect. 1.1.

## 2.4 *Quasi-Deixis*

Dreike (1975, p. 81) apparently does not consider the German prepositions *vor* (in its locative sense) and *hinter* to be deictic in their primary uses, as she says, “Prepositions such as *vor/hinter* [‘in front of’/‘behind’] are constituents of basically non-deictic prep.phrases [sic] whose function is to identify the location of the objects in question”. However, she later (p. 85) states:

So far our predications [e.g. *Maria steht vor der Tür* ‘Maria is standing in front of the door,’ p. 83] have been treated as unambiguously “naming” the location of objects or entities. This is however not the case as *vor/hinter* are prepositions which make a “quasi-deictic interpretation” (Leech 1969, p. 167) necessary as they include or can include the speaker as their point of orientation, and thus can only be disambiguated by pragmatic knowledge of the situation.

<sup>14</sup> If I understand correctly, Colombo and Seymour (1983) use *near* and *far* when referring to words, and *NEAR* and *FAR* when referring to actual “location of an object (relative to the self or to another object)” (p. 76), i.e., to the concepts which these words stand for.

She then goes on to describe the three interpretations of *Maria steht vor/hinter dem Auto* (Dreike 1975, p. 85; ‘Maria is standing in front of/behind the car’). The quasi-deictic interpretation, which “includes the speaker and his interpretation” (ibid., p. 86) is the following:

Maria is understood as being on that side of the car [on] which the speaker sees himself. In other words: she is between any side of the car and the speaker uttering the sentence. Likewise she can be said to be behind the car if she is standing on that side of the car which the speaker does not see, i.e. if the car is between her and the speaker. On this reading it is not relevant whether she faces the car or not. (ibid.)

Neither Dreike nor Leech explains why they consider this kind of interpretation quasi-deictic rather than deictic; it seems the same as the reading described as deictic by Retz-Schmidt (1988, p. 95; quoted in Sect. 2.1 above).

### 3 Anti-Deixis

#### 3.1 Spatial Adpositions and Anti-Deixis

I will now introduce and discuss the notion *anti-deixis*. I believe that some adpositions may involve deixis in a different way: in some contexts, the use of them implies that the place being mentioned is not at the deictic center; they are thus similar to *there*, which means roughly “where the speaker is not.” Consider again the following examples, the first of which was given by Mackenzie (2003, p. 8) (to illustrate a different point, as we saw):

- (12a) He lives under the bridge.  
 (12b) He is under the bridge.

To me, it seems infelicitous to utter these sentences if one is under the bridge; I would probably say *here* instead. If we replace *the* with *this*, yielding *He lives/is under this bridge*, the situation may be improved. The judgments are subtle and may depend on various factors, such as the size of the bridge, which part of the bridge the speaker is under, and which part of the bridge the person referred to is/lives under. I have the same sort of judgments for sentences in the past and future tenses: *He was attacked under the bridge* and *The meeting will take place under the bridge* also give the sense that the speaker is not under the bridge. I would probably say, “He was attacked here” and “The meeting will take place here” if I were under the bridge.

Admittedly, judgments differ on such questions. For example, out of four native English speakers asked whether they would say (12b) while they were under the bridge, two said no,<sup>15</sup> one said probably not, and one said yes. A linguistically so-

<sup>15</sup> Of these speakers, one (who is linguistically sophisticated) stated that he would not say it, “at least not without a ‘too’ at the end”; the other originally said that she would say it, but later said that she would not, and said that in normal conversation she would say something else (which one can interpret to mean that she could say it under certain conditions).



phisticated native speaker of French accepted (13a) and (13b), which are very similar to (12a) and (12b), in the context in question (i.e., if she were under the bridge):

(13a) Jean habite sous le pont. ('Jean lives under the bridge.')

(13b) Jean est sous le pont. ('Jean is under the bridge.')

A linguistically sophisticated speaker of English, D. Gary Miller, said the following (personal communication):

I wonder if...antideicticism is also a function of the verb. With BE...the P *under* is antideictic for me, but LIVE does not force antideicticism, at least in certain circumstances. Of course I would prefer "here." But BE, in the absence of some additional verbiage, is unequivocally antideictic.

The same verbal effect was evident in the judgment of a linguistically sophisticated native speaker of Turkish. Instead of *Ahmet köprüünün altında(dır)* 'Ahmet is under the bridge,' he stated that he would say *Ahmet burada* 'Ahmet is here.' On the other hand, he could say *Ahmet köprüünün altında yaşıyor* 'Ahmet lives under the bridge' (quite similar to (12a)) if he were under the bridge.

*At* may have a stronger sense of the speaker not being at the place indicated; perhaps sentences such as *John is at school/work* make one feel that the speaker is not at school/work. Another explanation, which may amount to the same thing, is that *at school* and *at work* have some implication of the person in question being away from the physical context of utterance (as in *Where is John?* (which one probably would not utter if John were in sight)—*He is at work*). To take another example, I also do not think we would say "John is at the beach" if we ourselves were at the beach.<sup>16</sup>

Anti-deixis may not occur with all locative adpositions for reasons I do not understand; for example, one can say *He is in this room* even if one is in the room. However, before we claim that spatial *in* never causes anti-deixis, we must examine the other possible factors involved, e.g., the size and nature of the location named (the room, in this case). Also, the choice of a proximal demonstrative rather than an article may be crucial here, and *in* probably is anti-deictic in some contexts.

I may have come up with the notion of anti-deixis (and the term) independently, but the same general idea has been brought up before, though not always using the terms *anti-deixis* and *anti-deictic*. Djenar (2007, p. 39) says:

As pointed out by Herskovits [(1986)], the conceptualization of an entity as a point is triggered by physical distance between the observer and the entity described. For instance, the use of "at" in June is at the supermarket" suggests a remote viewpoint where the observer is located at a distance from both June and the supermarket. Similarly (13) [a sentence in Indonesian] suggests that the speaker is not in the city of Solo at the time of utterance.

<sup>16</sup> The same holds for *at home*; even if John and Mary share a home, it might be odd for Mary to say "John is at home" if Mary were in the same house/apartment as John; she would say "John is here." However, none of this applies with a first-person subject; in fact, obviously if I say "I am at school/work/home/the beach," I must be there (if I am stating a true proposition). Perhaps all of the implications involved are covered by Grice's maxims: if I say "John is at the beach" when in fact John and I are at the beach, I am not giving the right amount of information for some contexts, and not cooperating, since I am giving the mistaken impression that I am not at the beach.

- (13) Ani *di* Solo.  
 Ani <sub>LOC</sub> Solo  
 ‘Ani is in Solo.’

The term *anti-indexical* occurs in some work. For example, Malamud (2012, p. 29) uses it when discussing Kratzer (1997); according to the latter author, the German word *man* “one” can refer to an *anti-group*, i.e., a group of people of which the speaker is not a member. Malamud (2012, p. 29) says:

- Kratzer treats the non-inclusive use of *man* as an anti-indexical, that is, an item whose semantics specifically excludes the speaker.... However, as her own examples demonstrate, the only way to ensure that *man* is speaker-exclusive is to exclude the speaker on pragmatic grounds (i). Also, quantified sentences with *man* suggest that the speaker is never excluded from the domain of quantification. Thus rather than being anti-indexical (truly speaker-exclusive), the impersonal *man* is unspecified for speaker-inclusion. [...]
- (i) Als ich in die Pension zurückkam,  
 When I into the boarding.house returned,  
 servierte man schon die Suppe. (Kratzer 1997, p. 1)  
 served one already the soup  
 ‘When I returned to the boarding house, they were already serving the soup.’

Malamud’s sense of *anti-indexical* seems to be basically the same as anti-deixis, assuming that it can be expanded to cover not just the speaker but the speaker’s location (and temporal location).

As I said earlier in this section, judgments differ on whether prepositional phrases are anti-deictic in particular sentences. Green (1992b, p. 337) seems to reject the idea that prepositions are anti-deictic, as he says the following about the phrases *in Scios*, *to Naxos*, *out of Italy*, and *in Tuscany*:

These expressions are not necessarily uttered from a position outside the geographical location being referred to; if we do infer this then it is because of other features in the text rather than because of some innate quality of the prepositional group. In the direct speech utterance “To Naxos? Yes, we’ll take you to Naxos” (L43),<sup>17</sup> for example, it is the verb tense which enables the reader to presume that the utterer is outside Naxos.

However, he continues (*ibid.*, pp. 337–338):

Other examples are not so clear. The opening line<sup>18</sup> presents a number of problems:  
 The ship (S)\ landed (P)\ in Scios (A)<sup>19</sup>  
 There is nothing linguistically remarkable about this clause. Our linguistic competences enable us to most naturally read the line as narrated by an agency *outside* Scios. The narrator is presumed not to be writing at the same place as that to which he is referring. In other words, content place and coding place are presumed not to be the same.

In this case, it is not obvious that our judgment that the narrator is not in Scios is due to “other features in the text”; I would say that it is due to the anti-deictic force of *in*.

What I am claiming in this section is that, under certain (complex and not fully understood) conditions, a fair proportion of (non-projective) adpositions are

<sup>17</sup> The reference here is to line 43 of Ezra Pound’s “Canto II.”

<sup>18</sup> I.e., the opening line of the second stanza of Pound’s “Canto II.”

<sup>19</sup> I believe that “S” stands for subject; I do not know what “P” and “A” mean, as Green does not explain this.

anti-deictic. An example, perhaps the clearest example, of an anti-deictic word is *there*, which Bouchard (2013, p. 286) says “has the lexical property of referring to an anti-deictic element” and therefore “refers to a locus in the mental space of the speaker, but other than the speaker.”<sup>20</sup> As I have told students in my semantics/pragmatics course, *here* means where the speaker is, *there* means somewhere where the speaker is not. One could argue that anti-deictic items are a type of deictic item; again, as I have said in class, in order to know where the speaker is not, you have to know where he is. Anti-deixis is less precise than deixis; for example, *here* in any particular utterance refers to one place; any particular utterance of *there* could, in principle, refer to an infinite number of places, every place in the universe except the one referred to by *here*. Of course, *there* can also be anaphoric. Note that *there* does not (necessarily) mean far from the speaker, as opposed to near the speaker or in the speaker’s location, as it could mean some place relatively close to him.

### 3.2 Another Type of Anti-Deixis

Hale and Shrestha (1996), are, along with Denis Bouchard, among the earliest authors (to my knowledge) to use the term *anti-deictic*. Most of their paper deals with Newari kinship terms, which they say can be deictic, like such terms in English, and with “the anti-deictic suffix *-mhɔ*” (p. 405),<sup>21</sup> which can “override” (p. 403) the deictic sense of such terms. Kinship terms are not commonly mentioned in lists of deictic items (except in discussions on social deixis); Hale and Shrestha (*ibid.*, p. 404) say the following:

Kin terms in English have a deictic sense when used in direct address.

4. “Mother, please come here!”

Here the term “mother” has the speaker as reference point. Example (4) can be appropriately uttered only to a person who can be regarded as the speaker’s mother. The kin term “mother” in (4) is thus used in its deictic sense.

Not all occurrences of kinship terms are deictic, e.g., *mother* in *John’s mother is happy* does not depend on reference to the extralinguistic context for its interpretation (although one would have to know which individual named *John* is being referred to). One might wonder when an anti-deictic suffix would be used. The following situation, cited in Hale and Shrestha (*ibid.*, p. 406) provides an example of such a context, falling under the heading “Where the default picks the wrong landmark in direct address” (*ibid.*). Someone says *mā:-mhɔ*,<sup>22</sup> i.e., the Newari morpheme meaning ‘mother’ followed by the anti-deictic suffix. Hale and Shrestha (*ibid.*) explain the situation as follows:

<sup>20</sup> As I noted above, I may have come up with the term *anti-deictic* independently, although I am not certain of this; in any case it does not seem to be a common term. It occurs several times in an earlier work by Bouchard, namely his (1995) book.

<sup>21</sup> This suffix has another function—to indicate focus.

<sup>22</sup> The example is actually written as *mā:-mhɔɔ*, but I believe that this may be an error.

Here a man is addressing a woman who was the mother of a child who was present. The addressee was not the speaker's mother. She was a mother, but not his mother, hence the default for direct address would have picked the wrong landmark, namely the speaker. To override this default the speaker utilizes the anti-deictic (AD) *-mhc*.<sup>23</sup>

That is, the normal interpretation if someone says “mother” as a form of address is that he is addressing his mother; in Newari, one can prevent this interpretation by attaching *-mhc*.

### 3.3 *Anti-Deixis and Non-Deixis*

One might wonder what the difference is between non-deictic and anti-deictic items, or whether there is any difference—if there is no difference, then there is no point in positing the notion of anti-deixis. In practice, sometimes, there may not be much difference, but I believe that there is a theoretical difference, although we might need to make more precise our notion of non-deixis. A non-deictic item is one that simply does not use the context of utterance as a reference point for location in space, time, or identification of people/objects. An anti-deictic item does use the context of utterance, but in a negative way; the location, time, etc. involved is *not* that of the speaker. (There may be a parallel with binding theory: One could distinguish among items which must be coreferential, those which must not be coreferential, and those which are not specified with respect to referentiality, although I do not know whether any language makes such a tripartite distinction.)

If we look at an example from Hale and Shrestha (1996, p. 404) we may get an idea of the difference between anti-deixis and non-deixis:

(14a) Tuesday is the second day of the week.

(14b) Tuesday was hectic.

(14c) Tuesday is going to be difficult.

The occurrence of *Tuesday* in (14a) is non-deictic; as Hale and Shrestha (ibid.) say, it “would have the same interpretation regardless of the speech situation. It simply names a day of the week without reference to the time of speaking.” I would add that it is not anti-deictic, since it does not give any impression about the day of utterance not being Tuesday; another example would be *Tuesday is my favorite day*. This could be said on a Tuesday, but it would not have to be; for example, on a Monday, one could say, “I can’t wait until tomorrow; Tuesday is my favorite day.”

In (14b) and (14c) *Tuesday* is deictic, since in order to know which day is being referred to, we need to know on which day they are uttered. I would argue that *Tuesday*, in such contexts, is also anti-deictic, because these sentences would not be uttered on the particular day to which *Tuesday* refers; one would say rather “Today was hectic” and “Today is going to be difficult.” In fact, many terms may be both deictic (in the sense of requiring context for full interpretation) and anti-deictic (in the sense of designating a place or time not of the speaking event).

<sup>23</sup> The form that appears in the text here is *-mhc*, but again this may be an error.

This suggests that the notion of deixis may need to be separated into two components, the context-dependent part and the part referring to the speaker's place/time. This is not a new idea and might be required in the description of some languages; thus, Lefebvre (2006, p. 96) says that the French word *là* "is a general deictic form, not specified for any value of the feature [proximate]" while *ci* is "used to pick out objects that are close to the speaker" and thus [+proximate]. Various authors mention items specifically used to refer to distal objects/people/places, e.g., in his (2008) book on a variety of Neo-Aramaic, Khan (p. 148) speaks of *far deixis forms*, which "are used to direct the hearer's attention to items that are in sight but far from both the speaker and the hearer". However, one possible difference between far deixis and anti-deixis is that with the latter (as I noted above), there is no necessity for being "remote" from the speaker; the necessity is for noncoincidence of place or time with the speaker. Far deixis is thus a subtype of anti-deixis, with anti-deixis being a type of deixis. An example of anti-deixis without far deixis involves days of the week. One evening, I could say, "Tomorrow I will go to the park"; this is anti-deictic, because *tomorrow* means a day other than the day of speaking, specifically the day after the day of speaking,<sup>24</sup> but I do not think that it involves far deixis, since the distance in time is not great.

In the case of (possibly) anti-deictic adpositional phrases, one might wonder whether the anti-deixis is due to the adposition or to NP which it governs. I am not certain about this, but I think that, in some cases, a preposition at least encourages an anti-deictic reading which is not present in its absence. Consider the following examples:

(15a) Maitland is a nice town.

(15b) I like Maitland.

(15c) John lives in Maitland.

(15a) and (15b) are neutral as to whether the speaker is in Maitland: he may be, but does not have to be; i.e., we have non-deixis. (15c) is not so neutral; especially given that Maitland is a small city, one might rather say "John lives here," or at least the existence of this latter possibility might discourage one from saying (15c).<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> A reviewer apparently disagrees with my analysis and believes that *tomorrow* is deictic, saying, "The reference's point [sic] is the day of speaking, so reference to the speaker is clear. This meaning is necessary to get the right temporal reference, which var[ies] from utterance to utterance". This is true, but since *tomorrow* cannot mean the day of speaking, it is anti-deictic. As I stated earlier in this section, there may be terms which are both deictic and anti-deictic.

<sup>25</sup> I chose Maitland for the examples in (15) since (by my standards as a former New Yorker) it is a very small city. My original examples had *New York*, but *John lives in New York* is less likely to be anti-deictic than *John lives in Maitland*; in other words, the size of a place may have a bearing on how strongly a PP containing its name is anti-deictic.

## 4 Temporal Deixis and Adpositions

Although most putative deictic adpositions are spatial, there are some temporal adpositions (or, basically, spatial ones used in a temporal way) which are (said to be) deictic as well.<sup>26</sup> We have already seen two such adpositions (Sect. 2.2), the Turkish postpositions *beri* and *bu yana*, both meaning ‘since’. Other possible deictic temporal adpositions are *ago* as in *two days ago* and *in* as in *in two years time* (both examples from König 2008, p. 306), as well as *since* as in *since 2010*. Not everyone would agree that *ago* is an adposition (adpositions which are exclusively postpositional are very rare in English);<sup>27</sup> if it is not an adposition, it cannot be a deictic adposition.

What makes *since* and *in* (putatively) deictic, as far as I can tell, is that they indicate a period of time, but one cannot know the length of this period unless one knows when the sentence containing one of them has been uttered. If I write, for example, “I have been in Australia since 1994”, without knowing when I wrote this, a reader will know when I arrived in Australia, but will not know how long a period I am claiming to have been here. On the other hand, in the case of *ago*, unless we know the time of utterance, we cannot know when the event being mentioned occurred, e.g., with *John arrived three years ago*, without reference to context we only know that John arrived three years before some point in time, which is not at all specific.

Again, considering the definitions of deixis brought up in Sect. 1.1, are the temporal adpositions just discussed deictic according to them? *Ago* is perhaps the most clearly deictic, because with it we have no idea of the temporal location of an event unless we know the time of utterance, as I indicated above. That is, there is “essential reference to properties of the extralinguistic context of the utterance” (Anderson and Keenan 1985, p. 259). There is also the connection of “utterances to the spatio-temporal coordinates of the act of utterance” (Lyons 1977, p. 636) in a certain way (analogously to what happens with spatial adpositions); what is being focussed on is not the time of speaking (as there is with the word *now*); rather, the time of speaking is used as a reference point to locate the time of another event. Similar arguments apply to *in*, which, however, makes reference to an event after rather than before the moment of utterance (as in *I will finish the paper in an hour*).

*Since* (in the relevant use) may be less obviously deictic, at least if we think of Anderson and Keenan’s (1985, p. 259) definition. Consider *John has been studying at Oxford since 2011*. Here, what we do not know without context is the length of time of the studying; we do know when it began. However, given our world knowledge, we might be able to work out at least the upper limit of the span of time involved; if we change the sentence to *John has been studying at Oxford since 1711*, given what we know about how long people live, and how long degrees usually

<sup>26</sup> Macrae (2010, p. 131) lists prepositions among temporally deictic items: “Temporal deixis includes tensed verbs, temporal adverbs..., and prepositions (for example, ‘beyond,’ ‘with,’ ‘over,’ etc.)”.

<sup>27</sup> See Kurzon (2008) on this issue.

take to finish, we can guess that this statement was uttered not later than, say, 1725. Therefore, knowledge of the context seems less “essential” with *since* than it does with *ago*.

#### 4.1 *The Denial of the Existence of (Temporally) Deictic Adpositions*

According to König (2008, p. 307), “there are no deictic prepositions in German,” unlike in English. One of his examples involves *ago* and its German counterpart, *vor*. If I understand him correctly, he takes *vor* to be non-deictic, because while it can mean ‘ago,’ it can also mean ‘before’:

(16a) two years ago—*vor zwei Jahren*

(16b) two hours before sundown—*zwei Stunden vor Sonnenuntergang* (ibid.)

The occurrence of *vor* in (16b) is not deictic, or might not be, because we can figure out the temporal location of the event being mentioned (elsewhere in the sentence containing it) without reference to the speech situation.<sup>28</sup> However, both the English and German versions of (16a) are deictic, as König would agree. What König seems to mean is that *vor* is not used **exclusively** deictically. The same applies to *seit*, which can mean ‘since’ or ‘for’; in a sentence such as *Er wohnte seit langer Zeit in Berlin* (ibid.; ‘He lived in Berlin for a long time’), *seit* is not deictic.

Thus, when König says that German does not have deictic prepositions, he apparently means German does not have prepositions that can only be used in a deictic way. I do not know whether this is an interesting assertion; many of the deictic spatial prepositions of English can also be used non-deictically; it would indeed be interesting if German simply lacked deictic prepositions, i.e., if no prepositions could be used deictically in the language.

<sup>28</sup> One might argue that deixis is involved here if (16b) means “sundown on the day of utterance” (e.g., *You must be out of town before sundown*). A clearer example would have been “before my father’s death.” I might then disagree with Haspelmath (1997, p. 44) (or perhaps I just have a broader notion of deixis than he does) when he says, “As a rule, NP-based simultaneous adverbials are non-deictic, i.e., the forms of ‘at 5 o’clock,’ ‘at Christmas,’ and ‘in the morning’ do not depend on the relation between the reference times and the moment of speech.” These seem deictic to me (although not because of the preposition), just like temporal terms which he (ibid., p. 45) sees as deictic, e.g., *tomorrow*. If someone says that something will happen tomorrow, we know that it will happen during a certain day, but we do not know which day unless we know when the act of speaking occurred; if someone says something will happen at 5 o’clock, we know that it will happen at a certain time, but, unless we know when he said it, we do not know on which day at that time (i.e., we do not know exactly when, or even close to exactly when, since there have been a huge number of days since time began being measured fairly precisely: there have been hundreds of thousands of days which could be said to have a 5 o’clock). For that matter, there is a requirement not only for temporal information about the act of speaking, but also for locational information: 5 o’clock on a given day is not the same time for me here in eastern Australia as it is for someone in New York (which is why statements about deadlines for, e.g., abstract submissions sometimes specify not only the time and the date that something is due, but also a time zone).

Cervoni (1991, p. 240) seems to have the same notion of deictic items as König, stating, “Il n’existe pas de préposition que l’on puisse qualifier de «déictique», c’est-à-dire impliquant nécessairement une certaine forme de lien référentiel avec un élément ou plusieurs éléments combinés du cadre énonciatif” (‘There is no preposition which one can describe as “deictic,” that is which necessarily involves a certain form of referential link with an element or several combined elements of the context of utterance’); he may only be talking about French. He says (p. 242) that there are four French prepositions, *dans*, *depuis*, *devant*, and *derrière*, which

pourraient être considérés comme ayant un rapport plus étroit avec la deixis [than prepositions such as *à*; see above for his remark on *à la gare*], en ce sens que, dans certains de leurs emplois, elles impliquent par elles-mêmes... une certaine localisation temporelle ou spatiale du locuteur et/ou de l’allocutaire.

(‘could be considered to have a more narrow relation with deixis in the sense that, in certain of their uses, they implicate by themselves... a certain location of the speaker and/or of the addressee.’)

Cervoni (ibid.) gives examples of non-deictic and deictic occurrences of these four prepositions (the translations are mine):

(17a) Il pleuvait depuis trois jours (depuis le 1er novembre) quand l’accident se produisit. (‘It had been raining for three days (since November 1) when the accident happened.’)

(17b) Il pleut depuis trois jours (depuis le 1er novembre). (‘It has been raining for three days (since November 1).’)

(18a) Il faudra que vous ayez quitté la ville dans les trois jours qui suivront la sentence. (‘You will have to have left the town in the three days which follow the sentence.’)

(18b) Pierre partira dans trois jours. (‘Pierre will leave in three days.’)

(19a) Le chien court derrière la voiture. (‘The dog is running behind the car.’)

(19b) Jacques s’est caché derrière le platane. (‘Jacques hid behind the plane tree.’)

(20a) Jacques vous attend devant la Mairie. (‘Jacques is waiting for you in front of the town hall.’)

(20b) Pour la photographie, mettez-vous devant le massif de fleurs. (‘For the photograph, place yourself in front of the bunch of flowers.’)

## 4.2 *Some Crosslinguistic Issues*

Possibly interesting issues are whether some temporal meanings crosslinguistically are always expressed by adpositions which allow deictic and non-deictic uses, and whether some such meanings are always expressed by adpositions which only allow one or the other use. For example, Haspelmath (1997, p. 100) states, “‘Within’ markers never express both distance-future and distance-prospective, they are always purely deictic. It is not clear to me why this should be so.” *Distance-future*, like *distance-past*, involves “marking of distance from the moment of speech,” and thus deixis (ibid., p. 36); *distance-prospective*, like *distance-retrospective*, involves cases where “the [temporal] distance [from the time of an event being described] is measured with respect to a reference point which is different from the moment



of speech” (ibid., p. 37), and there is no deixis. However, his assertion seems to be incorrect, as shown by some of his own examples. Consider first the following sentences (ibid., p. 91):

(21a) They tore down the house within five hours.

(21b) Sie haben das Haus innerhalb von fünf Stunden abgerissen. (same meaning as (21a))

*Within* and *innerhalb* are not deictic here, since the specification of beginning of the span of time mentioned (and thus the actual temporal location of this span of time) does not depend on the moment of speaking; I could say (21a), referring to the same event, now or 10 years from now. These appearances of *within* and *innerhalb* are anaphoric, since the beginning of the span of time in question is presumably recoverable from previous discourse, e.g., (21a) could occur after a sentence such as *The workmen arrived early in the morning on October 1*. On the other hand, the following sentences (ibid.) can involve deictic uses of these words:

(22a) Bob will make 77 cookies within one hour.

(22b) Bob wird innerhalb einer Stunde 77 Plätzchen backen. (same meaning as (22a))

It would not be surprising if some languages, unlike English and German, did have words meaning “within” (in the relevant sense) which were restricted to either deictic or non-deictic use; I will leave this question (and similar questions about other temporal prepositions) for further research.

### 4.3 *Anti-Deixis and Temporal Adpositions*

The anti-deictic effect discussed above in Sect. 3.3 may also be caused by temporal Ps. (We have already seen that some temporal words, e.g. *Tuesday*, can be anti-deictic.) For example, if I say “John arrives on Sunday” (and I am using the present tense rather than the future, so that the anti-deictic effects do not come from the tense), one will conclude that today is not Sunday. Likewise, we would not say “John arrived on Sunday” or “in January” if today were Sunday or this month were January (and he arrived earlier that day/month); we would say “John arrived today/this month.” I find a weaker effect with years, that is, it seems more natural for me to say, “John arrived in 2013” (instead of “John arrived this year”) than “John arrived on Sunday” (in the respective relevant situations), perhaps especially because at the time of writing, we were approaching the end of 2013. Further, *John arrived in January* may be at least slightly better than *John arrived on Sunday*. All of this may mean that there is a time-scale effect in play.

One could argue that the anti-deictic effect does not depend on the preposition, because with days it can be deleted, e.g., *John arrives Sunday*. In reply, one might assert that there is still a phonetically null preposition involved in such sentences, as discussed by, e.g., Rothstein (1995). There are also two curious facts that may have a bearing here: such preposition omission is not grammatical with terms denoting longer spans of time, e.g., \**John arrived January/2013*, and, on the other hand, there must be preposition deletion (if we posit such a process) with the deictic

equivalents of at least some such terms, i.e. (at least in English), one cannot say \**John arrived on today*.

The sentence ? *John arrived in this month* is better, so perhaps there is again some time-scale effect.

The second fact has been noticed by Quirk et al. (1985, p. 692), who say:

Prepositions of time-when are always immediately absent before the deictic words *last*, *next*, *this*, *that*, and before the quantitative words *some* and *every*:

I saw her *last Thursday*/\**on last Thursday*.

[...] Also nouns which have 'last,' 'next,' or 'this' as an element of their meaning lack prepositions:

I saw her *today/yesterday (morning)*

I'll see her *tomorrow (evening)*.

One might wonder why this is the case; perhaps, if certain temporal adpositions are anti-deictic, there could be a clash between their anti-deictic meaning and the deictic meaning of words such as *last* and *today*. However, the same sort of fact does not seem to hold for deictic spatial terms, e.g., we can say *in this city* and *on that roof*. (*Here* and *there* do not occur with *at*, but that may be because they already contain some locative meaning; one can say *in here/there*, although the meaning is not exactly the same as *here/there*.)

There is also the curious fact that when words such as *next* follow their head noun, as can occur in British English, "[t]he preposition is usually present" (ibid., p. 693), e.g., (*on*) *Sunday next* (ibid.). A preposition can also occur "with deictic phrases referring to times at more than one remove from the present" (ibid.), although it "is usually optional" (ibid.), e.g., (*on*) *the day before yesterday* (ibid.). For me, this last phrase is better without the preposition, at least in sentences like *He arrived the day before yesterday*. One might also argue that such phrases are only indirectly deictic as they refer to a time relative to a time which is referred to by a deictic item. That is, *yesterday* is deictic, because we can only identify which day it denotes through knowledge of the speech situation; *the day before yesterday* means one day before the day preceding the one in which the speech act took place. Of course, we cannot tell which day is being referred to without knowing when the speech act took place, but we know that whichever *yesterday* is being referred to, the *day before yesterday* means exactly the day before it. This latter part is not deictic and can be found in phrases which are not deictic at all, e.g., *the day before World War I began*.

Thus, the explanation for the ill-formedness of phrases such as \**on last Thursday* cannot involve an anti-deictic-deictic clash. This is also shown by the fact that, as Quirk et al. stated, it is not only deictic adjectives such as *next* but also the quantifiers *some* and *every* which cannot appear immediately after prepositions such as *on*.

A problem for the anti-deictic analysis of some adpositions is that even in the absence of these prepositions, in contexts when an analysis positing a null preposition is not plausible, we have the same effect. For example, we do not generally say "Sunday will be a beautiful day" if today is Sunday, and we are referring to today (rather than the following Sunday); we would say "Today will be a beautiful day." (Once again this effect is weakened or disappears if terms denoting longer periods

of time are involved: in early January of 2014, I can say “2014 will be a great year” as well as “This year will be a great year.”) In such cases, *Sunday* is behaving as an NP, and cannot be preceded by a preposition: \**On Sunday will be a great day*. There is a related fact: We do not generally say *on this day* to refer to today,<sup>29</sup> but we do say it to refer to a day of the same date in the past (and we also use it for anaphoric reference), sometimes with the addition of *very*, e.g., *John arrived today!/\*on this day*, but *On this (very) day Julius Caesar was murdered*.

There is thus much that is unclear in relation to anti-deixis and temporal phrases, but there is certainly an anti-deictic effect with some phrases of this type. I might finally mention a temporal preposition which seems to be strongly anti-deictic, *since*. One would not say (except in jest) “John has been working here since 2013” in the year 2013; thus, the phrase *since x*, even in the absence of any context, indicates that the time (month, year, etc.) of speaking is not *x*. I stated above that *since* seems to be deictic, so, like many adpositions (and other words) it is both deictic and anti-deictic, which would follow if anti-deixis is a kind of deixis.

## 5 Conclusion

We have seen that some adpositions are clearly deictic, and others are arguably so. However, there are adpositions which are difficult to imagine as being deictic; many or most of these are not spatial or temporal, e.g., *for*, *concerning*, *in spite of*. This is not surprising, since there are no analogous non-adpositional deictic items, while there are non-adpositional deictic spatial and temporal words.

Some adpositions may be anti-deictic, that is, they, or rather the phrases which they head, may point to places and times that are not those of the utterance event. Various other types of words are also anti-deictic, which is not the same as being non-deictic. The facts relating to anti-deixis, e.g., the exact conditions which lead to it, remain unclear, and there is room for much more work on this subject.

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<sup>29</sup> There is a type of exception to this involving ceremonial contexts, e.g., a wedding celebrant might say “On this day, we celebrate the love of John and Mary.” (I thank Ben Shaer for leading me to think of such exceptions.)

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# Transparency and Context in Legal Communication: Pragmatics and Legal Interpretation

Brian E. Butler

**Abstract** This chapter analyzes pragmatics in relation to the concepts of transparency and context in legal communication. First, the basic argument offered in Marmor’s *The Pragmatics of Legal Language* is critiqued. Second, I use Dascal’s *Transparency and Doubt: Understanding and interpretation in Pragmatics and in Law* to both critique and extend the agenda of a pragmatics of law. Third, I introduce two recent US Supreme Court cases, *Smith* and *Bailey* to give an example of dispute over the meaning of the word “use” in American statutory law. Finally, the analysis will be completed through the investigation of a more pragmatic conception of pragmatics. The argument will have two parts. First, it is ultimately argued that Marmor’s claim that law, because it is largely a domain of strategic action, does not benefit from “supplemental” pragmatic analysis, ignores complexities in the legal realm as well as the resources offered within a pragmatic pragmatics for a much more substantial understanding of law and legal discourse. Second, I argue to the contrary that a broader and more contextualized conception of pragmatics as exemplified by Dascal in “Transparency and Doubt,” and supplemented by insights from Peirce and Dewey, offers important tools useful in analyzing the domain of law and legal discourse.

**Keywords** Inferential pragmatics · Neo-Gricean pragmatics · Explicatures · Pragmatics and law

## 1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze pragmatics in relation to the concepts of transparency and context in legal communication. First, Andrei Marmor’s *The Pragmatics of Legal Language* will be outlined and critiqued. Marmor investigates law as legislative

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activity from a specifically Gricean conception of pragmatics. Both Marmor's descriptive claims as well as his analytical claims will be challenged as stipulations that are not viable in the realm of legal speech (conceived broadly). Most importantly, his description of the role of pragmatics as only useful for "pragmatic enrichment," when combined with the investigation of legal speech, will be challenged. Second, I outline and explicate a more useful conception of pragmatics as exemplified in Marcelo Dascal's writings on law. Dascal offers a much broader role for pragmatics, indeed a central and foundational role. This conception will be investigated through analyzing his claims about the necessity of interpretation and rationality assumptions in law. Third, through an examination of two recent US Supreme Court cases, *Smith* and *Bailey*, I highlight some of the implications and virtues of Dascal's pragmatics of law. Finally, it will be argued that the result of the first three sections entails that to be useful, a legal pragmatics must be rooted in a more pragmatic understanding of legal and linguistic practices. This understanding of pragmatics, as influenced by the work of Peirce and Dewey, allows for a much more informed analysis of the use of language within legal practice.

## 2 Marmor and *The Pragmatics of Legal Language*

Andrei Marmor in *The Pragmatics of Legal Language* offers a very succinct summation of the usefulness of a pragmatics of law analysis centered in the insights of H. P. Grice and the acceptance of a legal positivism framework. As Marmor puts it, accepting without argument the legal positivist's stance, "In most standard cases, the content of the law is tantamount to the content that is communicated by the relevant legal authority. It has long been noticed by linguists and philosophers of language, however, that the content of linguistic communication is not always fully determined by the meaning of the words and sentences uttered. Semantics and syntax are essential vehicles for conveying communicative content, but the content conveyed is very often pragmatically enriched by other factors" (Marmor 2008, p. 423). Given this legal positivist and Gricean framework, for Marmor, the basic idea to investigate becomes where and when a "pragmatic enrichment" of given syntax and semantics could be taken to form, or not to form, part of what is actually determined by legal expressions (Marmor 2008, p. 424). As is standard in this conception of pragmatics, therefore, the importance of context and distinction intervening between what is distinctly said semantically and what is implicated in context creates the analytical agenda. From this starting point it becomes important and informative to distinguish between what is "said," "asserted," and "implicated" (Marmor 2008, p. 424). Importantly, Marmor writes, "let us stipulate here that what a speaker says on the occasion of speech is the content which is determined by the syntax and semantics of the expression uttered" (Marmor 2008, p. 425). But, of course, assertion goes beyond what is only said, the most obvious and classic examples of this linguistic phenomenon being the essential contextually of the use of indexicals and demonstratives. Therefore, once again, the nature and extent of

“pragmatic enrichment,” what is implicated or asserted beyond what is explicitly said, becomes worthy of analysis. This being the description of the research agenda, Marmor sets about applying it to linguistic practice within the discipline of law.

To begin, Marmor asks us to “take an act of legislation as our paradigmatic example of legal speech” (Marmor 2008, p. 427). But this activity, if it is taken to exemplify the important aspects of linguistic use in law, immediately highlights a set of problems for pragmatics because the Gricean scheme assumes linguistic activity is an essentially cooperative activity and Marmor claims, at first sight quite plausibly, that legislation is not a cooperative activity. Rather, legislative activity, and therefore law as a system, is for Marmor correctly described as a form of strategic behavior (Marmor 2008, p. 429). And because legislation, as our paradigm instance of language use in law, is strategic, it is therefore lacking in both proper general norms of conversation and specific contextual knowledge (Marmor 2008, p. 430). This point leads to the claim that legal language lacks the required grounding for the existence of the Gricean conversational maxims necessary to ground an analysis of the pragmatics of legal discourse. Therefore, one cannot assume enough cooperation to create the necessary grounding for implicatures of a Gricean nature. Because of this, the central examples of Gricean pragmatics are largely inapplicable. Once again, this is because “The enactment of a law is not a cooperative exchange of information” (Marmor 2008, p. 435). Indeed, for Marmor, legislation is often “much more opaque than a regular conversational situation,” and this opacity is not only caused by the essentially strategic nature of the legislative enterprise but also because of three further factors: (1) “problems of insufficient information,” (2) uncertainty over where the conversation begins and ends, and (3) uncertainty over who the conversational parties are (Marmor 2008, p. 434). Further, these problems are compounded by the fact that in legislation, in the legislative process, there are really at least two conversations going on. First, there is the conversation between legislators themselves. But, in addition to this, there is the second conversation between legislators and the target subjects of the legislation. Marmor notes, further, that the situation is even more complicated than that. There is also a place that courts serve, a conversational role within law that the courts are involved in, such as mediator (Marmor 2008, pp. 435–436) or as supplying an analogue of conversational maxims through a type of “acoustic filter” (Marmor 2008, p. 440).

As outlined above, Marmor’s outline of pragmatics in the context of law has some real virtues. First, by confining the analysis to legal positivist and Gricean assumptions and using an act of legislation as the paradigm example of legal speech, one has both a specific set of tools to utilize and a discrete and easy-to-identify specific object to analyze. This analytical project, of course, also allows for the clear separation of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics and, therefore, demands a specific analysis confined to noticing and understanding how “pragmatic enrichment” within legislative practice functions. Further, if Marmor is correct in his claim that implicature only functions within a realm of speech that is largely cooperative, and that the legislative domain is not cooperative but is a form of strategic behavior burdened with problems that renders its linguistic practices more opaque, then it does seem to follow that a Gricean pragmatics of law will be of only marginal use.



Indeed, if legal discourse, as opposed to everyday speech, is properly characterized as suffering from greater problems of insufficient information, as well as the further difficulties in identifying the proper boundaries of the conversation as well as who is actually party to the conversation, it may well be that the realm of analysis amenable to pragmatics is trivial at best. This, while a negative point mostly pointing to the lesser usefulness or need for a pragmatics or investigation of implicature in law, would still be an important conclusion getting at some essential aspects of legislative speech activity. Not only would the use of pragmatic analysis in the legal domain be shown of marginal use but also the nature of law as a realm that is generally strategic in nature would have been clarified. This, of course, would be an important philosophical conclusion.

But the virtues of Marmor's analysis are, in actuality, greatly outweighed by a couple of vices. First, even accepting Marmor's limitation of pragmatic analysis to Grice's project, many of Marmor's descriptive and analytical moves are open to question. For instance, characterization of the legislative process as a form of strategic behavior and not a form of cooperation is questionable. True, legislative activity entails a good amount of what can be properly described as strategic behavior. But such strategic behavior takes place in a larger cooperative context. A legislative body is, indeed, a form of cooperative behavior directly participated in, and constructed for, the creation of a space within which various types of strategic action (as well as other types of action) may be engaged. This fact seems to imply that a large amount of mutual understanding is built in to any strategic use of language within the domain or practice of legislative activity. In other words, Marmor treats a multidimensional project, the legislative process (and, further, the broader realm of legal practice), as if it was constructed upon only one level. This one-dimensional perspective distorts the nature of legislative debates and ignores the agreement available in the admittedly multiple levels of context, for instance, in the difference between a debate within a parliament versus speech to a larger public (Dupret and Ferrie 2008, p. 965).

The greater context of cooperation within the legislative process raises the possibility that the Gricean project might have much larger applicability in the area of law than Marmor allows.

Further, one may question why the stipulation that legislation is the paradigm case of legal speech should be allowed. In contrast, one might point to the claims made in M. B. W. Sinclair's article "Law and Language: The Role of Pragmatics in Statutory Interpretation." This paper analyzes the place of legislative speech in the context of statutory interpretation and finds multiple uses for Grice's cooperative principle the various maxims that are thought to follow. Not only does Sinclair find convincing uses for many of Grice's maxims (suitably modified for context) but also, just as importantly, there is no noticeable tendency in the paper to place legislative activity in a privileged place as a proper paradigm covering the whole domain of law (Sinclair 1985, p. 378). And this is quite significant. At least in legal systems founded upon common law traditions it might be argued that the judicial decision, and judicial speech, is a much more central example of legal speech. It would be a stretch, if this alternate starting point is accepted as plausible, to argue that the

context of legislative speech is fully analogous to judicial speech. The disanalogies between judicial and legislative activity seem to be somewhat profound. So, for instance, Yon Maley notes that adjudication is a specific discourse type aimed at the judge as third party “ringmaster” and “umpire” in a role that is institutionally set and constrained to a type of neutrality where range of meanings are partially set by context (Maley 1995, pp. 95–96). This idea of judge as neutral umpire implies, of course, a quite different role than seeing a judge as serving in a (quasi?) legislative function. Indeed, this distinction is central to much philosophical jurisprudence. Even if the picture of judge as an umpire is disputed, its opposite, the judge as a legislator, is seldom if ever fully embraced. Further, as opposed to many aspects of legislative activity, the speech of a judge as written in a judicial opinion is not nearly as often a case of interaction between equals, as opposed to a mediator’s role or that of a legislator (Maley 1995, p. 100). There are, of course, examples where judges work as equals among themselves, such as appellate sessions for example, but these are arguably just very visible and overemphasized exceptions to the general rule. So, if the reduction of law to legislation is not an acceptable move, then the narrow target of Marmor’s analysis obstructs a proper pragmatics of law.

Indeed, if the domain of inquiry is opened out even further to what is traditionally thought of as the whole justice system, the courts and the legal profession become even more salient. Legal culture in this broader sense is populated by professionals who arguably share, in Anna Wierzbicka’s terms, “cultural scripts” which “are shared understandings (of a given community of discourse)” or a “cultural logic” that potentially exemplifies cooperation or shared understandings to a much greater extent than in everyday speech (Wierzbicka 2006, pp. 35–39). Wierzbicka’s own example is the ability of the speech scripts or logic within law to trump the more broad cultural habit within English speakers to use “whimperatives” (Wierzbicka 2006, p. 45). In other words, legal discourse demands limitations upon the ubiquitous everyday hedging in commands. That is, legal commands and decisions cannot often be written in the form of whimperatives. This demand, of course, is only effective because of law’s accepted meaning within culture.

Here, the work of Elizabeth Mertz helps ground the analysis. In “Linguistic Ideology and Praxis in U.S. Law School Classrooms,” Mertz investigates the in-class language use of legal educational practices. From her investigation she concludes that in the legal classroom, “The ongoing pragmatics of discourse achieve coherence only through some kind of metapragmatic structuring, which construes that ongoing discourse as being a certain type of discursive event” (Mertz 1992, p. 326). More specifically, use of the “Socratic method” creates a context where enforcement of metapragmatic rules “is the mode of socializing students, molding them into new social identities (lawyers) by literally putting new voices into their mouths” (Mertz 1992, p. 329). This is because, she claims, “Structuring is a key ideological message of law school socialization. It prepares students for a legal world which constantly effects a translation of people into their roles (plaintiff, defendant) and actions into their legal categories (tort, breach of contract), in a system in which either of two opposing results are always possible (guilty, not guilty), and in which effectual and ‘correct’ metapragmatic regimentation (in courts, in legal documents, in law office

talk) yields powerful social results” (Mertz 1992, p. 331). In a later work, Mertz notes that discourse within legal practice is “a key locus of institutionalized linguistic channeling of social power” in society (Mertz 1994, p. 436). As a localized example of this linguistic channeling, she offers the necessary, yet transformative “translation” of the clients’ concerns into the proper legal language. This channeling in effect serves to tame and restructure the clients’ demands (Mertz 1994, p. 446; see also Engberg 2010, p. 50). Once again, this shows resources, indeed heavily reinforced and strongly emphasized resources, for cooperative meaning within law of a much greater extent than Marmor allows.

All of this makes the clarity of Marmor’s analysis appear less a symptom of rigor and more an example of, to use Wittgenstein’s image, drawing a sharp line around a fuzzy object, thereby, in the process, creating a false clarity that distorts the whole project. Marmor’s analysis gains any of its conclusions only by ignoring the real complexity of speech in the legal domain as well as the greater sets of tools the discipline of pragmatics offers for an analysis. This leads to the second worry. The parameters of Marmor’s analysis are way too narrow, indeed dogmatic in nature. Marmor’s project seems much too uncritically attached to Grice’s writings. Grice’s works are admittedly and properly foundational to the discipline of pragmatics. That being said, there are many more tools and broader research agendas within the discipline of pragmatics than those offered by Grice’s works.

For instance, Damiano Canale and Giovanni Tuzet argue that the syntax, semantics, and pragmatics distinction taken for granted by Marmor is not very useful. Because this schema has been challenged quite effectively “by authors such as Wittgenstein, Austin and Sellars,” there has been in their view “a general drift towards the ‘pragmatization of semantics’” (Canale and Tuzet 2007, p. 33). If this schema is questioned, room opens up for an alternate conception of semantics. Language is then seen in a pragmatic or Wittgensteinian sense, as a tool to be used in practice rather than as signs standing for something else (say, an object). From this angle, pragmatics in terms of a theory of how people use linguistic signs in practice becomes the center of a theory of language, rather than semantics. This, of course, is a far cry from looking at pragmatics as the residual category left over when syntactical and semantic investigation unfortunately is insufficient and a gap-filling “pragmatic enrichment” is therefore thought an unfortunate necessity as a subject of inquiry. In a more central conception of pragmatics, the semantic content of an expression can only be found within the greater context of a pragmatic explanation. If this description of legal language, legal speech, is accepted, then legal interpretation cannot be described properly as just “a means to determine the relation between signs and what they stand for (objects, states of affairs, events, mental states, ideal entities, etc.)” Instead, legal interpretation becomes understood as “an aspect of legal practice that aims to clarify the relation between two different linguistic actions” (Canale and Tuzet 2007, p. 34). And if this is the case, then “the ‘semantic content’ of a legal sentence, as conceived following the traditional distinction between pragmatics and semantics, is never sufficient to determine what the sentence really means.” Indeed, “The very criteria of correctness in using language depend upon the pragmatic interaction of the participants” (Canale and Tuzet 2007, p. 35). If this

version of pragmatics is accepted, then pragmatics is not a gap filler, but rather an attempt to explain what a linguistic practice means by analyzing how it works in action. Canale and Tuzet explore the implications of this version of inquiry through an analysis of Hart's infamous "No vehicle may be taken into the park" example. They construct a situation where two lawyers, "lawyer A" and "lawyer B" dispute over the interpretation of this statute. The two attorneys dispute over each of the law's components, "vehicle," "park," "to be taken," "into." And what they show is that through the legal discussion between A and B the various legal terms "acquire a different semantic content" (Canale and Tuzet 2007, p. 38). (This implication will be taken up in Sect. 4 below.) This shows at least one interesting aspect of legal language; as a technical language it is parasitic upon everyday language use, but even so, legal language is not easily reduced or mapped on to everyday use in any helpful manner. This, of course, makes any recourse to common use or dictionary definitions close to useless, notwithstanding (or proven by) cases such as the US Supreme Court's decisions in *Smith* and *Bailey* discussed in Sect. 4.

### 3 Dascal, Transparency, and Interpretation in Law

If the analysis in the last section is correct, then there are many more analytic avenues for constructing an informative pragmatics of law than Marmor allows for. For instance, if law is better seen as largely a cooperative project, then Marmor's conclusions are largely undermined. And as has been argued in this chapter, the descriptive claims about law contained in his article are implausible. Luckily, there are other possibilities for a pragmatics of law. For instance, Marcelo Dascal's work on legal interpretation exemplifies the virtues of a pragmatics of law that is constructed along the lines of the pragmatized or more pragmatic picture of pragmatics that was briefly discussed in the preceding section. For Dascal, pragmatics is not a "residual" or "enrichment" category left over after a previous investigation of the contents of the more essential categories of syntax and semantics has been completed. Instead, Dascal proposes that we think of pragmatics as the "study of the use of linguistic (or other) means through which a speaker conveys his communicative intentions and a hearer recognizes them. The object of pragmatics, therefore, is the set of semiotic devices directly and specifically related to the transmission of speaker's meanings" (Dascal 2003, pp. 8–9). As opposed to the program Marmor advocates, where the combination of syntax and semantic meaning is taken as *a priori* more essential or foundational, Dascal argues that a pragmatic move is necessary before these other categories can be investigated at all. That is, we must make a determination that a word has a clear meaning before a claim to the semantic content it has can be made. Taking a word's use as clear, therefore, is taken as an interpretive conclusion arrived at via an interpretive or pragmatic move where it has been determined that a "divergent" use has not been intended. Indeed, in order to recognize a communication as transparent, "we must have the means to determine that such a divergence does not occur in this particular case," and therefore "we must always perform a

pragmatic interpretation of an utterance, beyond its semantic interpretation” (Dascal 2003, p. 10). This is because while speech acts can communicate content through being “true” to syntax and semantics, content may also be communicated via various ways of undercutting or manipulating the very same conventions. In fact, for Dascal, “transparent communication is simply a special case, where the first interpretive hypothesis...is accepted because there are no reasons to reject it” (Dascal 2003, p. 17). Therefore, every speech act requires initial interpretation, and this must always be founded in pragmatics, “because, although making substantial use of semantics, the interpreter cannot assume that the result of the semantic decoding of the utterance...coincides with the speaker’s meaning” (Dascal 2003, p. 197).

This more foundational conception of pragmatics offers room where an effective and analytically useful set of tools, tools with quite interesting implications for understanding legal activity, may be developed. Applying this conception of pragmatic analysis to the law, Dascal specifically highlights two avenues of investigation. First, he investigates the nature of interpretation as it functions in the domain of law. Second, he also looks to the necessary assumptions required for effective legal practice. While it is admitted that these two topics in no way exhaust the possibilities of analysis, pursuing each of them allows for the development of important aspects of a pragmatics of law. This, in turn, could be used to help construct an empirically and analytically rigorous conception of the use of language and linguistic practices within the legal domain.

First, there is the question of textual interpretation within legal practice. Dascal starts by noting three different ways to understand interpretation. First, there is “*sensu largissimo*” or “SL-interpretation,” which is “any understanding of any object as an object of culture, through the ascription to its material substratum of a meaning, a sense, or a value.” For Dascal, this first type of interpretation is too ubiquitous to be of any import in the domain of law, where the aim is analyzing legal sources for a legally authoritative interpretation of applicable law. It is, of course, possible to interpret the legal profession, legal activity, or legal text looking for such types of meaning. Further, such interpretation is likely ubiquitous within the legal field. The problem, though, is that such a meaning is not what is normally noted or desired in the context of the analysis of specifically legal modes of interpretation. Second, there is “*sensu largo*” or “L-interpretation”, defined as “an ascription of meaning to a sign treated as belonging to a certain language and as being used in accordance to the rules of that language and to accepted communicative practices.” For Dascal, the second type of interpretation is trivially true for law as well, and so is unhelpful when investigating legally authoritative speech. Legal interpretation presumes basic linguistic competence and, except in extraordinary cases, does not rest upon such minimal competence requirements. So, the third type of interpretation, “*sensu stricto*” or “S-interpretation,” understood as “an ascription of meaning to a linguistic sign in the case that its meaning is doubtful in a communicative situation, i.e., in the case its ‘direct understanding’ is not sufficient for the communicative purpose at hand”, is left as significant (Dascal 2003, pp. 322–323). S-interpretation, as described, is only for upon problematic language and, for Dascal, this type of language is usually what is thought of as the type in need of interpretation

in law. In other words, it is usually thought that law, when clear, is applied without interpretation. Only if clarity is not found, then, is there generally thought to be a need for interpretation in law, and in this case the type of interpretation required is S-interpretation. This analysis, of course, rests upon a traditionally held picture of clarity that maps, as developed so far, nicely on to Marmor's analysis.

Once again, the idea is that in most cases, the syntax and semantics of legal speech, of a statute for example, are enough to determine the legal outcome, and therefore there is no need for interpretation. Dascal finds this type of analysis to be founded upon a naïve conception of discourse because it "conceives of the role of pragmatics in a very narrow way" (Dascal 2003, p. 329). Instead of this narrow picture, it is more correct to hold that

pragmatic interpretation cannot be restricted to working out indirect meaning. For, unless at least a summary contextual check of appropriateness is made, one can never know whether the utterance meaning corresponds to the speaker's meaning. Making such a check amounts to asking whether there are reasons not to accept the utterance-meaning at face value. If the answer is "No", one can say that the utterance is transparent. If it is "Yes", a heuristics for generating and checking alternative interpretations is put to work until a "No" answer is reached for a given interpretive hypothesis, which is then taken to be the speaker's meaning of the utterance in that context. (Dascal 2003, p. 330)

Accordingly, a pragmatic interpretation is always a matter of necessity, even in the case of the (properly identified) case of full transparency. On this analysis, where a pragmatics of language always precedes any conclusion about semantics, a conclusion of clarity in law really means "transparency." And transparency, in turn, is understood as an acceptance of the initially "computed" meaning. So, the first interpretive move in this schema is the acceptance of the most basic or initially arrived at meaning (possibly corresponding to the L-interpretation). But, importantly, this conclusion as to transparency is already an interpretation as to meaning that cannot be inferred from just the text itself. So, context is always important. But, even when legal language is interpreted as transparent under this process, this conclusion is always tentative. This follows because there may be situations where other aspects of the legal context might signal reasons for inferring a lack of transparency. And once there are reasons to look further, this realization leads to a search for so-called "indirect" meaning. Further, because there might always be reasons offered in the future for indirect or nontransparent meaning, there is always the possibility of further interpretation. From this it follows, importantly, that there is no noninterpretive bedrock to which to appeal.

An important reason that Dascal offers for the conclusion that interpretation is always necessary in the realm of law is that legal language is an essentially "fuzzy" language. To explain this concept, Dascal contrasts "fuzzy" languages with languages that are "hard" or "soft." A hard language is one that is fully determined, indeed so perfectly determined that its primary meaning is perfectly constrained. Therefore, it seems, interpretation in the context of a hard language would often be limited to investigating whether or not the language is being used correctly (L-interpretation). A soft language, to the contrary, is fully indeterminate. In this case, any determinate interpretation will be largely and explicitly a creative project.

This seems to correspond largely to an extreme form of SL-interpretation. A fuzzy language, on the other hand, combines features of both the hard and the soft. Because of this combination of hard and soft attributes, “fuzziness can strike anywhere. One cannot decide *a priori* whether a term is fuzzy or not” (Dascal 2003, p. 335). Fuzzy language, as opposed to hard or soft language, is the type of language most in need of interpretation. Further, because one cannot decide *a priori* whether a term in law is fuzzy or not, there is always a need of an initial pragmatic interpretation order to determine its meaning (Dascal 2003, p. 333). This means that in law there is always a sense in which S-interpretation is relevant. And not just in “hard” or “difficult” cases. Indeed, because “A legal text that formulates legal rules is always understood in the context of the legal system to which these rules belong,” there is no escaping S-interpretation in the context of an institution such as law that uses fuzzy language speech and yet often requires a determinant decision (Dascal 2003, p. 336). Further, in law what this requires is that the S-interpretation process be repeated until clarity is achieved. But, importantly, this does not create a regress problem because speech is situated in activity, and activities and actions ensure that S-interpretation comes to an end somewhere—when the interpretation is “clear enough” (Dascal 2003, p. 332). Here, once again, pragmatics must ground the process. In other words, an analysis that does not start with the importance of legal discourse as a practice rooted in worldly activity might be tempted to infer from this that in practice there must either be a foundation to which to appeal, or arbitrary appeal to power in order to avoid an infinite regress. On the other hand, once rooted in worldly practices we can both accept that S-interpretation is unavoidable and that interpretation-forcing litigation provoking will not be interminable (here, one would just emphasize the context of limited resources, transaction costs, finitude of human existence, etc.).

On top of the investigation of interpretation in law, Dascal also investigates some of the background communicative assumptions necessary for legal practice to function effectively. To make explicit these necessities, Dascal constructs a picture of “the rational lawmaker” in order to further describe the pragmatics of legal interpretation. His claim is that, “In so far as legal discourse in general, and legal interpretation in particular, is a communicative process, it is also subject to rationality assumptions.” Further, “In so far as it is a more regimented communicative process than ordinary communication, it should be expected that such assumptions play a more important and reliable role in the interpretation of legal discourse than in the interpretation of other forms of discourse” (Dascal 2003, p. 338). This, of course, is completely opposite Marmor’s claims about legal discourse being essentially strategic. In fact, if Dascal is correct, and I think that any careful description of the legal domain would show his picture of law to be much more descriptively correct than Marmor’s, then there is more, not less cooperation in legal discourse as compared to everyday speech. Of course, there may appear to be more cooperation in everyday speech due to there being less overt disagreement, but that might be because speech is most often less coercive (more able to live in the domain of whimperatives) when engaged in outside of the legal domain. In any case, for Dascal, legal discourse is a more regimented type of speech than that of the everyday, and, “the more a communicative situation is regimented as to its language, its norms of interpretation,

its fact-finding and fact-presenting procedures, the more it lends itself to a more or less straightforward application of the principles that embody the assumptions of communicative rationality” (Dascal 2003, p. 342). Dascal’s claim as to regimentation in law is, as seen in the section above, bolstered by the work of Mertz, Wierzbicka, Maley, Engberg, et al., and is evidence against Marmor’s stipulated truth that legislative activity and therefore, for him, law in general is best seen as wholly categorized under the description of strategic behavior. Indeed, having factored in the legal training supplied in law schools, and the standard claim that this training enables one “to think like a lawyer,” as well as the professional habits engrained and practiced within members of the legal profession, it is easy to see that this is a realm exemplified by a more constrained type of speech. While, as outlined above, legal language is admittedly fuzzy, and is often animated by strategic aims, there are all manner of strategies that may help determine meaning or otherwise work to constrain the type of speech that is allowed.

Given this understanding of the institutional resources for constraint of speech within law, Dascal argues that “An enacted legal text should be conceived as bearing a communicative message, sent from the sender (S) to some receiver (R) through a noisy channel” (Dascal 2003, p. 347, see also Posner 1987 for a similar discussion). In order to understand a communication in such a process, Dascal claims that we appeal, though not necessarily consciously, to the ideal of a “rational lawmaker.” The claim is that, “The receiver here reconstructs the sender’s meaning, by projecting into the sender (or the text) a notion of rationality. S/he asks not what the sender would have meant, but what the sender should have meant” (Dascal 2003, p. 349). As portrayed by Dascal, the conception of a rational lawmaker that is projected (and this is a greatly shortened summary) has good reasons for a decision, and these reasons fulfill basic formal criteria: he/she believes in facts that should be believed, desires what should be desired, formulates the aims and issues competently in language, is a competent user of the relevant rules of legal reasoning, uses the rules of legal language and, finally, uses the valid and relevant rules of legal reasoning (Dascal 2003, p. 350). In conjunction with the rational lawmaker, there is also understood to be an ideal of the rational interpreter (Dascal 2003, pp. 351–352). This is also a necessary projection because the lawmaker must assume in the same manner the rules enacted will be interpreted rationally. Therefore, the whole legal institution is seen as relying on some underlying assumptions. These are, it should be noted, assumptions that Dascal claims are required in order for the cooperative enterprise of law to function. This is an important conclusion—one that I think is largely correct. But if this conclusion is correct, there still remain a couple of potentially problematic issues. First, how much of law is determined by these underlying assumptions? (This will be the topic of the next section.) Second, how do we learn the content of these assumptions? Are they *a priori* and stipulative in nature, therefore falling back into all the problems of Marmor’s analysis? Or, to the contrary, is there a way to accept the claim about such assumptions without falling into this type of “applied semantics” pragmatic enrichment trap? This question, a very important question that Dascal does not fully engage, will be analyzed in Sect. 5.



As to the first question Dascal, while finding this background necessary, does not find that it determines specific decisions in any complete manner. Indeed, “Rarely— if at all—the reference to the rational lawmaker determines an interpretive choice. Usually more substantive reasons justifying the choice are required” (Dascal 2003, p. 353). Rather, all of the more standard ideologies of interpretation are parasitic upon this rational lawmaker/interpreter foundation. For instance, Dascal claims that there are only two truly basic types of ideology of interpretation, a “static” ideology that aims for legal certainty, predictability and stability, and a “dynamic” ideology that aims at an adequate fit of the law to contemporary society (Dascal 2003, p. 354). Both of these, though, are parasitic upon the more basic and more minimal assumptions of rationality that Dascal claims are underlying legal interpretation in either case.

So, Dascal’s version of legal pragmatics allows a much broader range of analysis than does that of Marmor. Marmor’s Gricean analysis rests upon an *a priori* acceptance of the importance of cooperation and the foundational aspects of syntax and semantics as opposed to the tertiary “enrichment” status of pragmatics. Indeed, the analysis not only accepts the prior tenets without question but also “stipulates” that legal “speech” is best characterized by the act of legislation and that legislation is correctly described as essentially strategic. From this, Marmor claims that the conclusion follows necessarily that pragmatics does not offer much for the analysis of legal speech. Of course, it is now obvious that this analysis is open to question at multiple levels. First, the discipline of pragmatics offers a much broader set of options than just those offered within Grice’s works. Further, the need for cooperation for Gricean implicature to be present has also been powerfully critiqued (Davis 1998, pp. 115, 129). Further, the picture of “pragmatic enrichment” in relationship to semantics and semantics offered by Marmor is questionable, given the move towards a more pragmatic version of pragmatics. Next, as opposed to the description of legislation as essentially strategic, it seems that any such strategic action must be seen as effective only within a greater context characterized by cooperation. Finally, legal speech might be much better seen as located in multiple locations one of which has clear import, being judicial activity.

Dascal’s analysis suffers from none of the limits that Marmor’s argument exemplifies. First, it starts by situating interpretation in context and identifying the need for interpretation in order to find clarity or transparency. This contextual understanding allows his analysis to note various types and uses of language as well as aspects of legal language that make interpretation and (at least initial) semantic ambiguity unavoidable. Second, it also notes the need for rationality norms in any legal activity. This acknowledges the overarching cooperation seen in legal speech. Further, and importantly, this type of pragmatics does not generate results from arbitrary stipulation but actually allows for an open investigation of legal speech as an activity. Dascal’s conclusion: “Neither as a starting point nor as an ending point of the understanding of a text is clarity an absolute given. Consequently, legal language has to tolerate the existence of interpretive doubt, even concerning the question of whether a text must or must not be interpreted” (Dascal 2003, p. 337). Indeed, “authoritative decisions never settle once and for all interpretative questions, since

they all can be themselves later on—or even in the same case—subject to further interpretative doubts” (Dascal 2003, p. 337). This claim will be investigated in the next section in relationship to a couple of US Supreme Court cases that hinged upon the interpretation of the meaning of the word “use” (Butler 2001, see also Soames 2009, p. 412).

#### 4 Pragmatics and the Use of “Use”

In *Smith v. US*, the US Supreme Court was confronted with the task of determining how to apply Title 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(1) which requires that an additional penalty of 5 years in prison be added to a standard sentence if the defendant, during a drug trafficking crime, “uses” a firearm. The statute additionally imposes a 30-year prison sentence if the gun used is fitted with a silencer. The lower courts disagreed over whether trading a gun for drugs counted as “use” under the statute. In other words, does payment for drugs in the form of a gun count as “using” a gun in drug trafficking? The majority of the Supreme Court found that when the defendant, John Angus Smith, traded a gun fitted with a silencer for cocaine he had, in fact, “used” a gun under the wording of the statute. Justice O’Connor’s opinion stated that in ordinary use one may “use” a gun in more ways than as a weapon. The legal rule resulting was that “Both a firearm’s use as a weapon and its use as an item of barter fall within the plain language of § 924(c)(1) so long as the use occurs during and in relation to a drug trafficking offense; both must constitute “uses” of a firearm for § 924(c)(1) to make any sense at all; and both create the very dangers and risks that Congress meant § 924(c) to address.” *Smith v. United States*, 508 U.S. 223 (1993) at 240, 241. Justice Scalia, in a scathing dissent, ridiculed this reasoning; “To use an instrumentality ordinarily means to use it for its intended purpose. When someone asks, ‘Do you use a cane?’ he is not inquiring whether you have your grandfather’s silver-handled walking stick on display in the hall; he wants to know whether you walk with a cane. Similarly, to speak of ‘using a firearm’ is to speak of using it for its distinctive purpose, i.e., as a weapon.” The *Smith* case might, because of this controversy, be thought a perfect example of the problem of interpreting fuzzy language in the legal context where a determinant decision must be made. Further, it also might be a clear example of a comment made earlier—that just because we use the word “use” everyday without often eliciting a complaint from our conversational partners does not mean that its use is more clear or cooperative in everyday conversation. It might be that normally, there is just less riding on the use of “use.”

This becomes quite explicit when two years later the Supreme Court revisited the very same statute in *Bailey v. United States*, 516 U.S. 137 (1995). This time the issue was whether having a gun in the trunk of a car used to transport cocaine for sale was “use” of a gun under the statute. The Court of Appeals held that the defendant could be convicted of “using” a firearm during a drug trafficking crime “if the jury could reasonably infer that the gun facilitated Bailey’s (the defendant’s) commission of a drug offense”. *United States v. Bailey*, 995 F.2d 1119 (D.C. Cir.

1993). The Supreme Court, in an opinion once again written by Justice O'Connor, found this reading of the statute too broad and against the natural use of language. This confident univocal conception of the natural *use* of language is somewhat startling given that this case showed a controversy over the meaning of "use" that made it to the US Supreme Court. Possibly more startling is the common assumption for most of the members of the court that ordinary language must have the resources available to decide the use of such a term in the realm of law. The court, in any case, adopted an "active use" standard that distinguished acts included under "use" such as "brandishing, displaying, bartering, striking with, and...firing or attempting to fire, a firearm" from other acts not covered under "use" such as a person carrying a gun in his or her clothing throughout a drug transaction.

This distinction, once again was, according to the Supreme Court's opinion, predicated upon the ordinary use of "use." Given the ongoing controversy, it seems that one could ask quite intelligibly why using a gun as a bartered good is "active use" of a gun? Indeed, bartering does seem distinctively different from brandishing, striking, firing, etc., in the context of activities pertaining to a gun. And yet, it is plausible that carrying a concealed weapon (or bringing it in the car's trunk) might be using the weapon actively. For example, this is much more "active" than leaving the gun in a drawer at home. Further, one might trade an unloaded gun or, for a different scenario, might be standing next to a trunk with a loaded gun with the intent to possibly brandish and fire it—and it seems at least plausible that the latter context be described as a more active use.

In all actuality, either of the two sides in *Smith* or *Bailey* could be seen as plausibly relying upon an ordinary or clear/transparent use of "use." Not only does "use" seem a most familiar and ordinary word, but one could also easily imagine how the case could have been treated as one where the word in question is clear and still agree with either the majority or Justice Scalia. Indeed, it is important to note, the original trial judge could have looked at the statute and claimed, legitimately, that the language was so clear that the legal outcome could not be in doubt. And, tellingly, the judge would have actually been correct if the parties to the criminal action had not raised the issue. But, once the meaning of "use," the use of "use," had become an issue in dispute, appealing to normal everyday usage proves to be less helpful than hoped. In the context of a court of law, once the word is disputed, interpretation is necessary, and the fuzzyness of the language as well as the need for an appeal to the rationality of the lawmaker and law interpreter becomes clear. Dascal's analysis is quite helpful here. Note the further fact that this analysis can incorporate Marmor's claim (that law is characterized by strategic action) into the larger theory related to the nature of legal language and cooperative background rationality assumptions. Indeed, the reason that the meaning of "use" in the context of the statute came up is because of the strategic nature of courtroom litigation. But, of course, the trial as well as the whole court system is an institution characterized by a greater set of cooperative activities. Therefore, once the semantic content of "use" became an issue, other cooperative activities were invoked in order to find determinant (enough) content. But because of this, a further and now pressing question (already noted above) needs to be raised. If the semantic content of legal speech is manifest in fuzzy language and the fuzzy language can be made determinant

only upon grounding based in necessary assumptions about the rational lawmaker and the rational law interpreter, how is the content of this grounding determined? After all, it is not as if the content of “rational” is necessarily more transparent word than that of “use.” But if this problem cannot be solved, any analysis that appeals to rationality assumptions such as Dascal’s will, once again, be subject to the very same objections that were fatal to Marmor’s project. In the following section, it will be argued that this problem can be solved through the development of a more pragmatic conception of pragmatics. In other words, what is needed is more reference to the ideas offered in philosophical pragmatism.

## 5 A Pragmatic Conception of Pragmatics

Revisiting Dascal’s characterization of the rational lawmaker, that is, the lawmaker that is assumed to have good reasons for a decision (reasons that fulfill basic formal criteria), who believes in facts that should be believed, desires what should be desired, formulates the aims and issues competently in language, is in addition to this a competent user of the relevant rules of legal reasoning, uses the rules of legal language and, finally, uses the valid and relevant rules of legal reasoning, one is left to wonder whether this is just as *a priori* a claim as some of Marmor’s? Is this just a stipulation? Is this semantic content that is foundational and *a priori* and known before the pragmatic application? To avoid this impasse, it seems, it is necessary to become quite pragmatic (in the sense attached to the classical program of philosophical pragmatism) viz., to properly investigate and inform the pragmatics of law. It follows from Dascal’s analysis that semantic meaning is a constructed category originating out of a pragmatic act of interpretation. But the rationality assumptions required in legal practice are, if they are to function as needed and described under the conclusions of this analysis, not able to be found within a semantic analysis of the content of the word “rationality.” If not there, then they must be necessarily founded upon a context of worldly habits and practice. Of course, there was an occasion above to appeal to worldly practices and habits in order to avoid the problems of a potential interpretive infinite regress. Here, the same appeal can be made to ground the rationality assumptions necessary for legal practice. Indeed, this appeal becomes even more plausible when one also notes the amount of legal education allotted to proper form (both proper speech and proper decorum). While this might seem a trivial or mundane conclusion, indeed a conclusion difficult to doubt, it needs to be emphasized given the acceptance of the primacy of the privileged syntax/semantic picture often accepted in the analysis of language use and pragmatics as a discipline. To argue for this move towards pragmatism is precisely to argue for the “pragmatization of pragmatics” as Canale and Tuzet would have it (Canale and Tuzet 2007, p. 33). This, in turn, would mean that the rationality assumptions that Dascal identifies as necessary within legal practice, like that of any implicature or presupposition, are based upon context and practice, are founded upon actions, and not primary or centrally upon any formalized or fully formalizable content.

The practice of law, and legal discourse, is an excellent discipline within which to notice this. For example, as opposed to how such habits are learned and practiced

implicitly in everyday speech (at least among adults), in the realm of legal practice, as Mertz points out, legal training is quite explicit and effective in using deliberate “metapragmatic structuring” to socialize students into professional roles and properly channeled linguistic habits (Mertz 1994, p. 436). This can be also described in Wierzbicka’s terms as being indoctrinated into “cultural scripts.” All this admitted and consciously enforced training, and the resultant ability to “think like a lawyer,” helps construct a habitual picture of the rational legal practitioner that, while it may not determine the proper use of “use,” will, on the other hand, create a cooperative practice where such disagreements can be channeled, discussed, and settled to the satisfaction of the profession as a whole, if not to every judge or justice. In other words, within law the various intentionally and constructed practices show a ubiquitous institutional effort to constrain interpretation, and enforce semantic authority, within practicable bounds. Indeed, given all the effort within legal practice to normalize legal argumentation, it is unsurprising that a judge when interpreting a statute often finds clear language. But, as opposed to the statute being a manifestation of just plain everyday language, as both O’Connor and Scalia wanted to find, once inside the context of the courts, the language instead is backed by highly structured and specifically legal rationality assumptions and practices. And these extensive cooperative practices, in turn, are premised upon and constructive of what it means to think and act like a lawyer. Further, this is part of, and at the same time parasitic upon, the whole set of habits instantiated in the institution of law and government. Given the shift of context from everyday usage to the legal context, and the technical use of language in a court of law where a specific conclusion must be arrived at, a word that is clear (enough) in everyday speech might become insufficiently determinate. But this does not mean that there are no pragmatic rationality assumptions governing the determination of an interpretation. To the contrary, as Dascal claims, and as is exemplified more specifically in the examples of both O’Connor and the court’s majority in *Smith* and *Bailey*, as well as Scalia when dissenting, legal argumentation and interpretation rely on the rationality assumptions being in place. Otherwise, their argumentation over what the law ought to be would be completely futile or just obfuscatory. Certainly, if such assumptions are not accepted, it would make their expectation that the court’s holding could have predictable effects questionable.

This analysis, as offered by Dascal and otherwise supported by the work of Engberg, Canale, Maley, Mertz, Tuzet, and Wierzbicka, is further supported by the conception of pragmatics developed in “Pragmatist Pragmatics: The Functional Context of Utterances,” by John Collier and Talmont-Kaminski, as well as that found in John Dewey’s logic as analyzed by Tom Burke in *Dewey’s New Logic: A Reply to Russell*. In Collier and Talmont-Kaminski’s case, they rely upon the work of Charles Sanders Peirce to argue that “semantics must be a target that we can ‘hit’ only through pragmatics” (Collier and Talmont-Kaminski 2005, p. 63). They argue along Peircean lines that even the clearest statement rests upon context and can only be understood in action. How else would two or more people be able to agree? Statements are, therefore, essential social and public. Further, and this bears directly upon the construction of such things as rationality assumptions within communicative practices, they claim that “since we must coordinate beliefs about the world,

observation of the world will play an essential role in coordinating beliefs” (Collier and Talmont-Kaminski 2005, p. 71). Therefore, semantic meaning, conventions, and/or rationality assumptions are only possible through recourse to observation of context in the world. Transparency, then, is a function of a standardized habitual and worldly activity in context. Standardized context, though, can only be recognized in practice. Their conclusion is quite reminiscent of Dascal’s analysis above when they claim that “We really cannot consider the semantics of language prior to its pragmatics, although conventional usage will place a limit on the range of possible interpretations” (Collier and Talmont-Kaminski 2005, p. 85). Incidentally, these claims might also be thought to fit quite nicely with the inferentialism advocated by Robert Brandom (Brandom 2000, p. 4). Indeed, Mathias Klatt does an admirable job of linking Brandom’s work to legal interpretation (though I would argue that Klatt, like Marmor, uncritically accepts too much of the “follow law” versus “make law” distinction attached to the legal positivist tradition; Klatt 2008).

Collier and Talmont-Kaminski’s argument nicely dovetails with Tom Burke’s understanding of John Dewey’s logic and the conclusion that “semantic models would be determined by modes of action” (Burke 1994, p. 82). Burke analyzes Bertrand Russell’s idea of logic and the ensuing need, given Russell’s assumption, for an object-based ontology for its semantics. Opposed to this object-based conception, he argues that “Dewey endorses an operation-based theory of *meaning*” where it is required that the “interpretation of grammars be specified at bottom in terms of actions and consequences (Burke 1994, p. 247)”. Further, and quite appropriate for an analysis of language use in the realm of law, Dewey’s logic entails that “a proper study of actual languages used as means for coordinating shared activities in the real world must accommodate the fact that communicative utterances are typically designed to transform experience” (Burke 1994, p. 249). This, of course, does not fit easily with a version of pragmatics that takes as primary the realm of a given semantic meaning and expects pragmatics to play a residual and marginally enriching role in the investigation of how this meaning is applied or mapped on to the active practice of legal discourse. The above analysis points to Dewey’s position that, as Burke puts it, “semantics is unavoidably epistemological in that it is based on an information-theoretic treatment of objects and facts and possibilities, couched... in terms of agents’ activities in the real external world” (Burke 1994, p. 254). This type of pragmatics, as filtered through the philosophical tradition of pragmatism, offers useful tools for the analysis of meaning and language use within the context of law. This understanding, in turn, will be seen as grounded in habits and activities that if excluded from the investigation will render understanding language use in law impossible.

## 6 Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed philosophical pragmatics in relation to the concepts of transparency and context in legal communication. First, Andrei Marmor’s *The Pragmatics of Legal Language* was critiqued. Marmor investigates law as

legislative activity from a specifically Gricean conception of pragmatics. Both Marmor's descriptive claims as well as his analytical claims were shown to be unhelpful and incomplete for an analysis of legal speech (conceived broadly). Further, the description of the role of pragmatics as useful for "pragmatic enrichment" was challenged. Ultimately, Marmor's argument founders upon both a needlessly abstract picture of analysis and language as well as an impoverished view of the practice and resources within legal speech. Indeed, any virtue of clarity to be found in Marmor's analysis is greatly outweighed by a lack of engagement in the actual details of the legal profession. The more careful and empirically grounded work of Wierzbicka, Mertz, Canale, Tuzet, Maley, and Engberg, among others, show a much more detailed analysis of legal speech, and because of this are much more helpful. A more useful conception of pragmatics was also found to be exemplified in Marcelo Dascal's writings. Dascal's investigation rests upon a much broader and more descriptively informed and analytically flexible conception of pragmatics. Further, his version of pragmatics does not rest upon linguistic categories developed within analytic philosophy and utilized as if they were natural kinds. Through an examination of two recent US Supreme Court cases, *Smith* and *Bailey*, some implications and virtues of Dascal's pragmatics of law were exhibited. His claim that there is always the need for interpretation in even the most apparently clear use of legal language was combined with a much more nuanced understanding of the use of language. This, in turn, was attached to his claim that legal speech necessarily was founded upon specific underlying rationality assumptions. It was the standpoint of the argument made in this chapter that this assumption (conceived in a properly experimentalist and Peircean fallibilist manner) was correct. On the other hand, without a further move towards a conception of pragmatics based upon the insights of philosophical pragmatism, Dascal's argument might fall prey to the same problems exemplified in Marmor. Finally, though, it was argued that the result of this chapter's analysis entails that a useful pragmatics of law and legal language use can and must be rooted in a more pragmatic understanding of legal and linguistic practices. Once rooted in this philosophical tradition, Dascal's analysis is greatly strengthened. In other words, this chapter argues that in the realm of legal interpretation and pragmatics, it is best to begin the analysis with a methodological acceptance of the primacy of practice rather than *a priori* analytical categories which force a conception of language and linguistic meaning as something preexisting that gets applied. This understanding of pragmatics, as influenced by the work of Peirce and Dewey (and helpfully supplemented, as so much of neo-pragmatism, with a strong dose of the later Wittgenstein) allows for a much more informed analysis of the use of language, or speech, within legal practice. Of course, the acceptance of such a pragmatic conception of pragmatics in relation to law and legal interpretation brings along with it a host of further and quite powerful philosophical conclusions about the nature of law, jurisprudence, and the place of law in society as well.

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# Conversational Implicatures in Normative Texts

Lucia Morra

**Abstract** This chapter considers the occurrence in statutes and codes of law of conversational implicatures, and their use in judges' interpretation. The question is discussed after a textual analysis of some provisions from the Italian Civil Code and of a subsection of the US Code framed by their interpretations in the two legal communities. The analysis shows that statutes often suggest a disjunction of conversational implicatures from which interpreters choose the one that best suits their interests, namely, in the case of judges, the one that settles the questions at issue. Conversational implicatures in normative texts have a normative stance. They are possible nuances of meaning from which legislators, acting as a collective agency, more or less consciously authorize interpreters to choose, in order to build their interpretation. The peculiar normative status of implicatures in statutes and the possibility of exploiting them in legal interpretation rest on the fact that the legislature and judges run a particular kind of conversation extended in time and mediated by texts which they respectively produce and interpret, following minimal conversational maxims that they know their interlocutors follow as well.

**Keywords** Inferential pragmatics · Law · Conversational implicatures · Legal interpretation

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# 1 Conversational Implicatures in Normative Texts: A ‘Positivistic’ Approach

Andrei Marmor raised the question of whether and how legislators in producing statutes, and judges<sup>1</sup> in interpreting them, may entertain conversational implicatures (Marmor 2008)<sup>2</sup>, that is, information that, given the literal meaning of an utterance, it is necessary to infer from the context in order to make the utterance comply with (some of) the maxims through which H. P. Grice articulated his principle of cooperation.<sup>3</sup> In Marmor’s view, conversational implicatures cannot contribute to the content of a statute because both their production and interpretation lack grounds for their controlled use: not only are the speaker’s intention and contextual factors indeterminate but, and above all, legal interpretation is not a cooperative activity.

As for every communicative product of a collective agency, the text of a statute is not produced with a univocal intention. Proposed by part of the legislature, a bill is approved when through negotiation and legislative discussion, it reaches a textual formulation ambiguous enough to satisfy the majority of voters, namely a formulation that lets each of them read its ambiguities in the sense that most favours their own interests or best accommodates their concerns. This compromise is reached when legislators make ‘tacitly acknowledged incomplete decisions’, in particular when they ‘deliberately leave certain issues undecided’ and for this purpose leave ‘some formulations of the bill open to conflicting interpretations’ with the hope ‘that the interpretation they favour will eventually prevail’ (Marmor 2008, p. 436). So, different groups of legislators may vote for a statute intending its text as implicating different and incompatible contents: but they act collectively intending the text they approve to remain undecided regarding some of its implications. This being the genesis of a statute, intentions accompanying its enactment range from those of the proposers of the first draft of the bill to those of the individuals who approved its final text without even knowing it. Interpreters lack a criterion for determining which of the intentions ‘ought to prevail’ in the interpretation at stake, because they lack a standard by which to judge ‘who counts as a relevant party to the conversation, and what kind of contribution different parties to the conversation should be allowed to make’ (ibid., p. 437).

Indeterminacy of the legislature’s intention does not, by itself, exclude the possibility of a controlled use of generalized implicatures in statutes, that is, those implicatures created by a combination of the semantic features of certain standard expressions and

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<sup>1</sup> Marmor considers legal interpreters all the addressee of the statutes, and then courts, citizens, lawyers, etc. Here, I address only the question of whether and how judges may speculate on conversational implicatures.

<sup>2</sup> For an updated synthesis of the debate prompted by Marmor, see Morra and Pasa (2015).

<sup>3</sup> These maxims are presumptions about utterances that listeners rely on and speakers exploit in communication. In cooperative exchanges of information, Grice argued, parties to conversation are guided by expectations of informativeness, truthfulness, relevance, and manner of the utterance they process. When the literal meaning of the utterance does not fulfil them, hearers are entitled to assume that the speaker intended them to inferentially enrich the meaning, relying on the presumption that she did not say what she believed to be false, that she made her contribution relevant and neither less nor more informative than was required for the purposes of the exchange, and that she avoided obscurity of expression, ambiguities, and unnecessary prolixity, and was orderly.

particular contexts in which the conversational maxims apply. In some contexts, these expressions automatically implicate a certain content, unless this implication is explicitly cancelled by the speaker. So, since context may prompt or impede their activation, generalized implicatures may be considered partially independent from the speaker's intention (Poggi 2011). But only those who know (share) the contextual factors within which their utterance will be interpreted may exploit those factors for shaping the meaning of their words, and legislators do not have such information. Production and interpretation of statutes, being separate activities, are a priori performed in different contexts, mutually opaque (although at different degrees) to legislators and judges, so the first cannot presume that the second will recognise the relevant factors needed to produce the generalized implicature they meant. Even if social needs and reality, contexts, ordinary language, etc. were the same in context of legislation and in context of interpretation, legislators could not know in advance which interpretive arguments interpreters will adopt in interpreting the statute, in particular the criterion on which they will assign priority to contextual factors chosen for shaping this meaning.

In order to respect the complexity of the reality to which statutes apply, legal communities accept a broad range of arguments and techniques serving different ends and embedding different values for grounding a specific attribution of meaning to them, such as fidelity to the wording of the statute and/or to its author's intention, coherence with other statutes, compliance with values embedded in constitutional norms, etc. (amongst others, cf. Guastini 2004; Dascal 2003; Eskridge et al. 2006).<sup>4</sup> Each of these broad typologies of arguments, in their turn, subsumes different arguments, often supporting conflicting interpretations. An interpretation is legitimate when it gives the words of a statute the meaning they have in ordinary language (either the meaning recorded in dictionaries or that normally used) or in the lexicon of the legal community in which the statute is enacted or the meaning with which (part of) the legislature (may have) used them (the disjunctions being inclusive); it is legitimate when it respects the historical intent of the legislature and/or the reasonable purpose for which the statute should be applied; it is legitimate when it makes the statute coherent with the other statutes and/or complies with constitutional principles (and in both cases the choice of the relevant co-text is strategic). Interpretive arguments are all sufficient and none is necessary for legitimating an attribution of meaning; however, an interpretation is obviously more grounded the more arguments support it. Although different legal communities give these arguments different weights at different times, they never include a principle for deciding which of them must prevail when they justify different interpretations (applications) in their set.

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<sup>4</sup> In common law, it is usual to distinguish amongst textual canons of interpretation, which instruct judges to prefer certain interpretations based on the textual structure of the statute and represent everyday syntax and certain assumptions about how legislatures and legislators employ language (such as *noscitur a sociis*, *ejusdem generis*, etc.); substantive canons of interpretation, which instruct judges to prefer certain interpretations based on social and political values, namely on assumptions about the probable intent of legislators reflecting a public policy preference (rule of lenity, that directs a court faced with an ambiguous criminal statute suggesting multiple interpretations to choose the interpretation most favourable to the defendant, avoidance of abrogation of state sovereignty, etc.); deference canons, which instruct the court to defer to the interpretation of another institution; cf. Jaffe 2009, p. 306.

Without a hierarchy of interpretive arguments being formally settled, interpreters may assign them different priorities, a choice depending on both the characteristics of the case at stake and their moral-political values, and thus produce different interpretations of the same statute which are equally legitimate, provided they are sufficiently grounded. So, even if contexts of utterance and interpretation were the same, legislators would still not know which of these arguments interpreters will consider as having priority. The context in which the statute will be interpreted being structurally opaque to them, if they convey part of the content they intend through a generalized implicature, activated by the context of utterance, they cannot be sure that the context in which the statute is interpreted will still prompt its production; conversely, if the context in which a statute is produced impedes the production of an implicature the text suggests, legislators cannot be sure that the context in which the statute is applied will still prevent it.

Finally, and most importantly, the vein in which both legal production and legal interpretation of statutes are performed is not cooperative. Performed by agents animated by divergent interests, legislative conversation leading to the final draft of a statute runs along strategic lines; and in adjudication even judges are interested more in settling the specific case than in grasping what legislature really meant. They exploit ambiguity areas left by the text, amongst which eventual disjunctions of implicatures, in order to build a context in which the statute takes a meaning apt for the applicative task they are performing. Since legislators cannot assume interpreters are cooperative, namely that they will consider and respect their communicative intention, they cannot rely upon the fact that the meaning of the statute interpreters build will be nuanced with the implicatures they intended when they approved it. As opposed to ordinary conversation, typically cooperative, the conversation taking place between legislature and judges is then ‘typically a form of strategic behaviour, and a complex one at that’ (Marmor 2008, p. 429).

Pragmatic factors ruling legal interpretation seem then to obliterate the communicative potential of conversational implicatures that statutes may suggest: the opacity for judges of the context of utterance and for legislators of the context in which the statute will be applied, due to the possibility of diverging interpretive strategies, makes it impossible to infer in a univocal way that a given implicature is part of the meaning of a statute. In Marmor’s perspective, facing a text which allows different conversational implicatures, interpreters lack criteria for *discovering* which of them *ought to be* inferred. His conclusion is that conversational implicatures suggested by statutes are not a kind of pragmatic enrichment that can ‘be taken to form an integral part of what is actually determined by legal expressions’, namely ‘of the content of the law’, nor can they ‘be frequently relied upon in determining the communicative content of legislative speech’: they ‘tend to be unreliable in the legal context, because there are no clear and uncontroversial norms that determine what counts as relevant contribution to the communicative situation’. So, their role in legal interpretation ‘is, at best, unclear’ (Marmor 2008, pp. 424, 440, 444, 451).

## 2 Instances of Conversational Implicatures in Normative Texts

Marmor's ideas on the question are controversial (cf. Poggi 2011, Morra 2011, Butler 2015).<sup>5</sup> Here, they will be discussed after a look at what statutes and their interpretations have to say about conversational implicatures. For this purpose, some provisions belonging to the Italian Civil Code and a subsection of the US Code are examined 'through Gricean eyes' (Chiassoni 1999).

### 2.1 Two Examples from the Italian Civil Code (ICC)

*Italian Civil Code. Provisions on the Law in General. Article 12. Interpretations of Statutes:*

In interpreting the statute no other meaning can be attributed to it than that made clear by the actual significance of the words according to the connection between them, and by the intention of the legislature.<sup>6</sup>

The provision says that, in applying a statute, judges must regulate the sense they attribute to it on that made clear by two factors taken together: the meaning of the words of the statute (in their connection) and the intention of legislature. The provision groups the multifarious canons of interpretation admitted by legal communities for grounding a decision in two broad and abstract typologies, the first one revolving around an 'objective' parameter given by the text and subsuming arguments such as those of the literal meaning, consistency, etc., the second one revolving around a 'subjective' parameter and subsuming all the arguments related to the (variously shaped) supposed intention of the legislature. Given the semantic meaning of the conjunction 'and' linking the two typologies of arguments, the provision says that the meaning judges can attribute to a statute can be only the one which fits both of them. But it does not say which of these kinds of arguments must prevail when, as may happen, they produce different or even alternative interpretations of the same text.

Taken at face value, the order of exposition adopted in article 12 suggests a priority of 'objective' parameters because, when it is reasonable to hypothesise priority relations amongst conjuncts, as in this case, it seems automatic that the chosen order reflects this priority. Otherwise, the text would violate the maxim of manner; and in light of the alleged automaticity of the production of this implicature, the fact that the legislature did not cancel it (adding the phrase 'not necessarily in this order')

<sup>5</sup> Butler (2015; this volume) underlines that for Marmor, acts of legislation are a paradigmatic instance of language use in law, but judicial decision, at least in legal systems founded upon common law traditions, is a much more central example of legal speech.

<sup>6</sup> Preleggi al Codice Civile Italiano, art. 12: 'Nell'applicare la legge non si può ad essa attribuire altro senso che quello fatto palese dal significato proprio delle parole secondo la connessione di esse, e dalla intenzione del legislatore'.

seems to indicate that this implicature reflects its communicative intention. However, the Italian legal community does not take such a suggestion as mandatory, because it is just one of the implicatures made available by the text, an implicature which, once made explicit, may, given sound reasons, be refused. Sticking to the semantic meaning of ‘and’, for instance, interpreters can deny that the expositive order has that particular meaning, or even meaning in general. In order to do this, however, they must choose another of the implicatures made available by the text (‘legislature does not accord any priority to interpretive arguments’), and not cancelled (as it would be if the provision, for instance, ended with the words ‘considered in this order’). The violation of the maxim of manner this implicature would allow could be compensated for by the prevention of a violation of the maxim of quality. The text then makes at least two implicatures available. Interpreters choose the one that best suits their interests, and try to build a (con)text for the provision that not only does not impede the chosen implicature but corroborates it. The text of article 12 is neutral as regards its different possible readings: interpreters can complete its meaning with an implicature of their choice, provided that they use it to build a sound argumentation (sound from the point of view of the community).

The second example of implicatures examined here is made available by the whole text of the Italian Civil Code on marriage. Called on several times to evaluate whether this long text allows the extension of the institution of marriage to homosexual couples or not, most of the Italian courts decided that it clearly does not. Although the normative text does not say explicitly that only couples formed by one male and one female may marry, it gives sufficient indices to retrieve this piece of information and recognise it as an essential presupposition of the institution of marriage, a core part of the norm that cannot be erased by interpretation (as recently stated by the Constitutional Court, 138/2010). Attribution of this implicit sense to the normative text is based primarily on its literal-systemic interpretation, and secondarily on arguments revolving around the legislature’s intention.

Only a few articles of the whole text on marriage suggest through their wording that a presupposition of the institution is that the couple is composed by individuals of opposite sex. Most of the articles refer to those who want to marry or those who have already been married with bidirectional (unspecific) expressions like ‘spouse’, ‘consort’, ‘married couple’. However, a few articles use the words ‘husband’ and ‘wife’, and they are pivotal for the institution. In particular, article 107<sup>7</sup> states that the registrar may declare the parties married only after each of them has declared the intention to take the other to be his/her wife/husband. The literal and ordinary meaning of the words ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ being anchored to sex, and since nothing in the Code indicates that it must be differently understood, Y may declare to take X to be his *wife* only if X is (registered as) a female; and X may declare to take Y to be her *husband* only if Y is (registered as) a male. That Y is a male is a felicity condition (a presupposition) of the declaration of X, and vice versa. The declaration of

<sup>7</sup> I.C.C., art. 107: ‘Nel giorno indicato dalle parti l’ufficiale dello stato civile [...] riceve da ciascuna delle parti personalmente, l’una dopo l’altra, la dichiarazione che esse si vogliono prendere rispettivamente in marito e in moglie, e di seguito dichiara che esse sono unite in matrimonio’.

the registrar subsequent to both X's and Y's declarations inherits both their conditions of validity, and then presupposes their conjunction ('X is a female' and 'Y is a male'), thus implying that the registrar may marry only individuals of opposite sex.

A different question is whether the presupposition of article 107 can be projected onto the articles of the text on marriage that do not use the sex-laden words 'husband' and 'wife'. Actually, only if these articles are considered as including a presupposition that cannot be recovered from their wording can the fact that individuals composing the couple are of opposite sex be considered a condition of the whole institution of marriage. The projection may seem automatic, because if only couples consisting of a male and a female may make the declarations required in article 107, then, as a logical consequence, people of the same sex cannot marry. However, interpreters may hold this only after having activated an implicature to prevent violations of the maxim of relation: namely, they can hold as a logical necessity the 'trickling down' of the presupposition of the article 107 onto the sex-neutral articles only if they consider the whole normative text about marriage to be both a cohesive text in all parts, of which terms and their lexical analogues are used with a constant meaning, and a coherent text, composed by articles that may have their conditions of validity also in other articles. In other words, only after having produced the conversational implicature  $I_1$  'the specific presupposition of the article 107 carries over to every article of the normative text about marriage', suggested by the whole text, can interpreters hold the statement 'marriage is only for couples composed by a male and a female' as a presupposition of the whole institute. That  $I_1$  is an implicature and not a logical implication is proved by the fact that judges resorting to it never fail to reinforce their interpretation with reasons other than the literal-systemic, such as its compliance with the 'millennial tradition of common sense' that considers marriage as the union between a male and a female, and with the (plausible) meaning the historical legislature had in mind when it produced the text.

In order to preserve the cohesion and coherence of the whole text on marriage, interpreters can, however, choose another conversational implicature, namely  $I_2$  'the unspecific meaning of "spouse", "married couple", etc. used in most of the articles propagates to articles 107, 108, etc.'. At the moment, however, this implicature does not find a strong grounding. Although possible,  $I_2$  is today discouraged by the link the text has with ordinary language, connecting the meaning of 'husband' and 'wife' to the sex of their bearers: denying this link would mean depriving the sex-laden articles (and mainly article 107) of any meaning. The unspecific meaning of 'spouse' and 'married couple' could be projected onto the whole normative text on marriage only by substituting the terms 'wife' and 'husband' with bidirectional words such as 'lawfully wedded' or 'consort' (as proposed by part of the Parliament) in the sex-laden articles. Such a substitution would not necessarily require the production of a new normative text: the Constitutional Court could do it, should it consider articles 107 etc. unconstitutional. Recently asked to do so, however, the court refused to settle the matter in this way, holding that the substitution would not modify just an accessory aspect of the norm, but would rather redesign its core, a prerogative pertaining to the legislature only.

That ‘heterosexuality’ of the couple is a fundamental condition of the institution of marriage is not excluded by the fact that the legislature did not make it explicit. When the legislature promulgated the current normative text on marriage, same-sex couples were not added to the list of couples that cannot marry, as stated in article 87 (including for instance couples composed of two people related by blood), nor excluded from it because the opposite-sex paradigm of the married couple had never been legally questioned (no same-sex couple had ever tried to marry). This paradigm, being generally accepted at the time of the enactment of the text on marriage, may well have been a presupposition of the utterance context which was opaque to the legislators themselves: considering the paradigm held for interpreters as well, legislators could not have foreseen a context of interpretation in which the production of  $I_2$  had some plausibility (was no longer impeded). Today, however, this paradigm is legally contested, so the production of  $I_1$  is far from automatic, and interpretations based on it seem more and more in need of supporting argumentation other than the literal-systemic. Nevertheless, interpreters that today choose  $I_2$  do not yet find sufficiently strong reasons in the legal context to ground their interpretation.

## 2.2 *Conversational Implicatures in Common Law Statutes*

The conversational implicatures examined up to now were suggested by provisions belonging to a Continental European code. Let us now examine some of the implicatures raised by a subsection of the US Code (U.S.C.), a codification of the general and permanent federal laws of the USA.

Compilations of common law statutes are less structured than Continental codes. They do not resort to general formulas, but rather to highly detailed provisions, full of clarifications meant to prevent undesired interpretations that could arise from the wording.<sup>8</sup> At any rate, since anticipating every eventuality is impossible, common law statutes also contain vague terms which it is the job of the courts to make more precise, as subsection (c) of section § 924 of the U.S.C. shows.<sup>9</sup>

Section § 924 is in the part of title 18 of U.S.C. ruling crimes, and it is the third section of chapter 44, devoted to firearms. It follows section § 921, providing definitions for the chapter (settling, for instance, that throughout the chapter the word ‘firearm’ is used as meaning any weapon ‘which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive’), section § 922, ruling unlawful acts such as importing, manufacturing, trading firearms without license, supplying them to persons under 18 years of age, and section § 923, ruling licensing. Its subsection (c), when it was enacted in 1968, provided for forfeiture

<sup>8</sup> For instance, the U.S.C. Chapter 1 § 7 says ‘in determining the meaning of any Act of Congress, or of any ruling, regulation, or interpretation of the various administrative bureaus and agencies of the United States, the word “marriage” means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word “spouse” refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife’.

<sup>9</sup> For further examples of conversational implicatures in statutes, see Morra (2015).



of any ‘firearm or ammunition involved in, or used or intended to be used in, any violation [...] of any [...] criminal law of the United States’. Shortly after, the forfeiture penalty was replaced by jail time, and the subsection amended as such:

*A. U. S. Code (1968): Title 18, Part I, Chapter 44, § 924 (c)*

‘(c) Whoever

(1) uses a firearm to commit any felony which may be prosecuted in a court of the United States, or

(2) carries a firearm unlawfully during the commission of any felony which may be prosecuted in a court of the United States,

shall be sentenced to a term of imprisonment for not less than one year nor more than 10 years. In the case of his second or subsequent conviction under this subsection, such person shall be sentenced to a term of imprisonment for not less than five years nor more than 25 years, and, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the court shall not suspend the sentence of such person or give him a probationary sentence’.

In 1970, Congress cleared that the sentence imposed by § 924 (c) was in addition to and not concurrent with the sentence for the underlying crime. In 1984, it changed the predicate offence in ‘any crime of violence’, it required the firearm to be used or carried not only *during* but also *in relation to* the predicate offence, and it cleared that the mandatory sentence applied, even if the statute defining the underlying crime provided for enhancement if a dangerous or deadly weapon is used. From 1986, the statute covers also drug-trafficking crimes. In 1990 and 1994, Congress mandated harsher sentencing in cases where the defendant uses a more destructive class of weapons, such as machine guns, or those equipped with a firearm silencer. In 1998, Congress criminalized also the *possession* of a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence or a drug-related crime, and set enhanced sentences when the firearm is brandished or discharged. The current version is then:

*B. U. S. Code (1998): Title 18, Part I, Chapter 44, § 924 (c) (1)*

(A) Except to the extent that a greater minimum sentence is otherwise provided by this subsection or by any other provision of law, any person who, during and in relation to any crime of violence or drug-trafficking crime (including a crime of violence or drug-trafficking crime that provides for an enhanced punishment if committed by the use of a deadly or dangerous weapon or device) for which the person may be prosecuted in a court of the United States, uses or carries a firearm, or who, in furtherance of any such crime, possesses a firearm, shall, in addition to the punishment provided for such crime of violence or drug trafficking crime—

(i) be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not less than 5 years;

(ii) if the firearm is brandished, be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not less than 7 years; and

(iii) if the firearm is discharged, be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not less than 10 years.

(B) If the firearm possessed by a person convicted of a violation of this subsection (i) is a short-barreled rifle, short-barreled shotgun, or semiautomatic assault weapon, the person shall be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not less than 10 years; or (ii) is a machine-gun or a destructive device, or is equipped with a firearm silencer or firearm muffler, the person shall be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not less than 30 years.

Some of the implicatures evoked by the current version of the statute help the interpreters tracking the legislative and interpretive history of the statute (cf. Jaffe 2009). For instance,

(a) ‘Any person who, during *and* in relation to any crime [...]’. The statute identifies a person who used (carried, etc.) a firearm both during and in relation to a (special sort of) crime (both conjuncts must be true for their conjunction to be true). The chosen order between the addenda has no relevance for the semantic content of the statute: from a pragmatic point of view, on the other hand, it is suggestive. It prompts interpreters to build the class of those to be punished under this statute by making a restriction from the class of those who used a firearm during a crime to the subclass of those who used it also in relation to the crime. In other words, the sequential order of the addenda focuses the topic of the paragraph that rules on the position of those who acted at the crime scene, and suggests that the position of those who used a firearm in relation to a (specific kind of) crime *but not during* it is different and probably ruled by other statutes (as happens, cf. for instance in § 923). Furthermore, the sequential order tracks the fact that the conjunct ‘in relation to’ was added in 1984 to allay the concern that § 924(c)(1) would be applied when the presence of the firearm played no part in the crime.

(b) The definitions of *crime of violence* and of *drug-trafficking crime* provided by § 924(c)(2–3) (any felony that has as an element, the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another; any felony which is an offence under federal law prohibiting the possession, manufacture, import, export, distribution, or dispensing of a controlled substance) suggest that ‘during and in relation to any crime of violence *or* drug-trafficking crime’ means ‘during and in relation to any crime which is either a crime of violence or a drug trafficking crime’, the possibility of an inclusive reading of the ‘or’ being precluded (at any rate, the legislature usually clarifies that a disjunction has to be read as inclusive, cancelling the possibility of an exclusive reading by adding to the phrase the element ‘or both’<sup>10</sup>). The difference between the two sorts of crimes suggests investigating why the legislature grouped them together. After the 1984 amendment that transformed the offence during which the use of a firearm is covered by the statute in ‘any crime of violence’, courts experienced difficulties in interpreting the relationship between crimes of violence performed in the context of drug-trafficking and drug-trafficking crimes. In 1986, provisions specifically concerning firearms used or carried during and in relation to drug-trafficking crimes were then added.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For instance, § 924(b)(B)(ii) says that the person who sold a handgun to a juvenile knowing that he or she intended to use it in the commission of a crime of violence ‘shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both’.

<sup>11</sup> If the phrase is paraphrased as ‘during and in relation to any crime of violence or during and in relation to any drug-trafficking crime’ (which sounds reasonable; cf. Zimmermann 2000), the ‘or’ could have two readings (either as inclusive—here, ‘during A or during B or during both’—or as exclusive—here, ‘during A or during B but not during both’), thus suggesting two different implicatures to interpreters. Adopting the first reading, defendants who in the same circumstance commit both a crime of violence and a drug-trafficking crime would deserve only one minimum mandatory sentence for the possession or use of the firearm during both crimes. This interpretation both adheres to the standard semantic meaning of ‘or’ and respects the default status interpreters in ordinary conversations seem to assign to it (Chevallier et al. 2008); furthermore, it sounds reasonable when the mere possession of a firearm is contested. On the contrary, if in accord with statutory

(c) The parenthesis (‘including a crime of violence or drug trafficking crime that provides for an enhanced punishment if committed by the use of a deadly or dangerous weapon or device’) provides a clarification which is semantically redundant but pragmatically opportune.<sup>12</sup> It adds nothing to the logical content of the main sentence, because crimes of violence and drug-trafficking crimes which carry an enhanced punishment if committed by using a deadly or dangerous weapon or device are subclasses of the more general classes of crimes of violence and of drug-trafficking crimes. Why then did the legislature add the sentence in brackets? Asking this question, the interpreter accesses part of the pragmatic sense of the disposition. Considering how legal interpretation works, without the parenthesis, the statute could be interpreted as *laconic* (Caterina and Lantella 2011), that is to say as open to possible exceptions. In particular, interpreters could object that the statute does not apply to crimes of violence or drug-trafficking crimes that *already* provide for an enhanced punishment if committed using a deadly or dangerous weapon, thus reading the rule as ‘any person who, during and in relation to any crime of violence or drug trafficking crime (*unless* it is a crime of violence or drug trafficking crime that provides etc.) ...’, and they could give legitimate reasons for this reading (compliance with other rules of the system, with constitutional principles, etc.). This was exactly what happened. The early statute, which did not contain the parenthesis, posed interpretative problems relating to the cumulateness of sentences and the interaction of the statute with other criminal statutes. In 1984, Congress added, in brackets, the semantically redundant information in order to make it unquestionable that, although a firearm is a deadly weapon, there is an *additional* penalty for the choice of this particular kind of deadly weapon in committing the aforementioned crimes. Interpreters reach this conclusion by activating, first of all, an implicature aimed at preventing a violation of the second maxim of quantity (what makes the clarification non-superfluous?) and then an implicature aimed at preserving relevance (why did the legislature place this particular subclass within the classes of crimes of violence and drug-trafficking crimes—and not, for instance, that of crimes of violence or drug-trafficking crimes committed in schools?).<sup>13</sup>

(d) Ambiguities linked to the meaning of the phrase ‘uses [...] a firearm’ in this statute have been discussed by philosophers of both language and law (amongst the

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style the disjunction is read as exclusive, our defendants would deserve no minimum mandatory sentence, a clearly absurd outcome.

<sup>12</sup> For examples of this kind of legal formulation in Continental codes, cf. Caterina and Lantella 2011; Morra 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Another instance of ‘overinformative’ wording in this statute is the clarification ‘in furtherance of such crime’ before ‘possesses a firearm’, superfluous given the previous proviso ‘during and in relation to’, that already made clear that only who possesses a firearm in relation to a crime for which she/he is indicted deserves the minimum mandatory sentence (cf. a). The text probably echoes the concern of part of the legislature that the policy of stopping the practice of having firearms while committing the crimes the statute refers to could interfere with the right protected by the Second Amendment to the US Constitution concerning possessing, keeping, or bearing a firearm unconnected to service in a militia and using it for traditionally lawful purposes, such as self-defence.

most recent, cf. Butler this volume, Jaffe 2009; Neale 2007; Soames 2009). When the statute applied only to violent crimes, it posed few problems with respect to the interpretation of ‘uses a firearm’, since in those circumstances the use of a firearm usually involves brandishing, discharging, referring to in a threatening manner, etc. But after 1986, the statute applied also to drug-trafficking crimes, and the courts began to question what to ‘use a firearm’ in the context of a drug transaction meant. Although most of them concluded that the statute covered a broad range of conduct, it was applied inconsistently and unpredictably. For some courts, for example, the mere presence of firearms at the scene of a drug-trafficking crime was sufficient to constitute use, since defendants could use them to protect their drugs, cash, etc., or to embolden themselves, and thereby they increased the likelihood that the crime would succeed. Other circuits, however, required that a firearm be strategically placed and readily available for use during the underlying crime for considering its use as facilitating the crime (Jaffe 2009, pp. 310–312). In 1993, the Supreme Court held that also the use of a gun for trade may facilitate the illegal activity, and then chose one of the possible implicatures evoked by the statute effective at the time, that read:

*C. U. S. Code (1990): Title 18, Part I, Chapter 44, § 924 (c)(1)*

‘Whoever, during and in relation to any crime of violence or drug trafficking crime [...] uses or carries a firearm, shall, in addition to the punishment provided for such crime [...] be sentenced to imprisonment for five years, and if the firearm is a short-barreled rifle, short-barreled shotgun to imprisonment for ten years, and if the firearm is a machinegun, or a destructive device, or is equipped with a firearm silencer or firearm muffler, to imprisonment for thirty years’.

In 1992, John Angus Smith went from Tennessee to Florida to buy cocaine in order to resell it at a profit. An acquaintance of his, Deborah Hoag, arranged a meeting for him with a drug dealer in her motel room, to whom Smith showed his MAC-10 firearm. The dealer expressed his interest in becoming the owner of the gun, and Smith promised that he would discuss selling it if his arrangement with another potential buyer fell through. Unfortunately for Smith, Hoag was a confidential informant, and she told the police of Smith’s activities. An undercover officer was sent to her motel room, while others were assigned to keep the motel under surveillance. Upon arriving at Hoag’s motel room, the undercover officer introduced himself as a pawnbroker. Smith told him that he had an automatic MAC-10 with a silencer with which he might be willing to part, then he pulled it out of a canvas bag and said that he was willing to trade it for two ounces of cocaine. The officer told Smith that he would try to get the cocaine and then left, promising to return within an hour. Feeling uncomfortable, Smith collected his gun bag, climbed into his van and drove away. When policemen apprehended him after a high-speed chase, they found a nice arsenal in his van.

Amongst other things, Smith was convicted of having used the MAC-10 and its silencer during and in relation to a drug-trafficking crime. On appeal, Smith argued that § 924(c)’s penalty covers only situations in which the firearm is used as a weapon, not those in which it is used for barter. The Court of Appeals disagreed, arguing that the plain language of the statute applied to any use of a gun that facilitates in any manner the commission of a drug offence. In similar circumstances, however,

another Court of Appeals had held that trading a gun in a drug-related transaction could not constitute use of a firearm within the meaning of § 924(c). The US Supreme Court was then asked to decide ‘whether the exchange of a gun for narcotics constitutes “use” of a firearm “during and in relation to [a] drug-trafficking crime” within the meaning of U.S.C. § 924(c)’, and it held that it does (*Smith v. United States*, 508 U.S. 223 (1993)).

Both the majority opinion, delivered by Justice Sandra Dee O’Connor, and the dissenting opinion, written by Justice Antonin Scalia, endorse a (new) textualist approach to statutory interpretation. In order to confine judges’ interpretive discretion, New Textualism holds that they should consider nothing but the (whole) text actually adopted by the legislature, and ascertain what its words or their combination mean considering their dictionary entries or their ordinary use and using the rules of grammar and textual canons of construction (cf. fn.4). In short, judges ought to take a statute to mean what the plain, ordinary meaning of its words (the one most likely to have been understood by the whole Congress which voted on the statute and by the citizens subject to it) suggests that it means, —the meaning that is most compatible with the surrounding body of law into which the provision is integrated. When this meaning does not prove dispositive, canons of statutory construction linked to statutory history, related statutes, legislative history, and purpose can be considered—in this order, although their use increases judicial discretion, since no coherent original collective intent or purpose is embedded in the text. But when the meaning worked out with textual canons of interpretation is clear, it must be applied, even if doing so leads to an outcome different from the one the legislature is known to have intended when it enacted the statute, or even if it could be perceived as unjust, the only exception being the case in which it leads to a clearly absurd result.

Although Justice O’Connor and Justice Scalia adopted the same general approach to interpret the phrase ‘uses a firearm’, nevertheless they came to different conclusions (barter of a firearm is/is not a use covered by the statute), because they performed two subtly different kinds of textual analysis. The majority looked for the denotation of individual words and from them constructed the whole meaning of the phrase (refined by rules of grammar and textual canons of interpretation), whereas the dissent, recognizing also combinations of words (phrases, clauses, and sentences) as indivisible units of meaning, worked from the start on the whole phrase ‘use a firearm’, thus appreciating its idiomatic meaning (Jaffe 2009, p. 306). Secondly, the majority considered the ordinary meaning of the words to be the meaning(s) dictionary entries associate with them, while the dissent considered the ordinary meaning of the (combination of) words to be the way in which they are normally used (Solan 2005). Thirdly, the majority considered an implicature evoked by the text. If the text is thought of as rational and informative, *using* and *carrying a firearm* covered by § 924(c) must be actions linked by a common feature, since they both deserve a 5 years’ incarceration. For the majority, this common feature is the fact that in any of these options, the firearm is available for defendants to be used for what it was designed for, namely as something that ‘may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive’ (§ 922). In order to make the statute informative enough for the case at stake, the majority chose then the implicature  $I_a$  ‘§ 924(c)(1) covers *all* conceivable uses of a firearm effective in any fashion’, this

meaning that discharging a firearm, pistol whipping someone, breaking a window with a gun handle in order to enter the meeting place, bartering a gun for drugs, etc., are all actions that fall under (i).

Advantages of choosing this implicature, in the majority opinion, were many. Adding the minimum possible to the text, it made it informative enough for the case at issue; it complied with the ordinary meaning of the phrase ‘uses a firearm’ given by the combination of the ordinary meaning of ‘use’ (‘to derive generic service from’) and the statutory definition of ‘firearm’, an area which is not limited to the standard meaning the phrase has in everyday conversation (mirroring the most familiar example in which a firearm is used: brandishing it, discharging it, etc.), but extends to all possible or experienced ways in which guns may be used ‘in relation to’ a drug-trafficking crime. This wide meaning complies with the meaning that can be attributed to ‘use’ in the next subsection of the statute, § 924(d)(1), dealing with forfeiture of firearms ‘involved in or used in’ or ‘intended to be used’ in violation of offences listed in the surrounding sections, in many of which firearms are used not as weapons, but rather as commercial items (for instance, unlawful interstate commerce). The majority conceded that  $I_a$  could not have been the implicature with which Congress enacted the statute and then amended it, because legislative records did not exclude that in both occasions the term ‘use’ was intended to have a more limited scope, shaped on a more obvious and violent use of a firearm: however, even if that was Congress’s understanding, ‘that isn’t what it achieved’ through the wording it used, which ‘is not so limited’ (508 U.S. 223 (1993), p. 236). At any rate,  $I_a$  complies with the policy Congress adopted when it enacted the 1986 version of the statute—addressing the dangers and risks entailed by the mere introduction of firearms into the scene of drug transactions. In this perspective, an interpretation that criminalizes the exchange of a firearm for drugs advances the purposes which the legislature sought to attain by the enactment of the legislation—keeping drugs and guns apart. Finally, the risk that this interpretation entailed producing untoward outcomes was cancelled by the proviso that the use of firearms falling under § 924(c) is limited to that performed during and in relation to a crime for which the person may be prosecuted in a court of the USA. This suggests that a firearm must have had some purpose or effect for the defendant with respect to the crime she is indicted for, namely that its presence or involvement was meant at least to further it. So, even if employments of a firearm such as scratching one’s head with it may constitute ‘use’ of a gun under the implicature chosen by the majority, they cannot support punishment as long as they do not facilitate the drug crime (cf. Butler, this volume). For the majority, then, since the drug transaction for which Smith was indicted would not have been possible without the firearm, Smith’s use of his firearm was in relation to the offence.

In order to make the statute informative enough for Smith’s case, the dissent, in contrast, chose another possible implicature evoked by § 924(c), the implicature  $I_b$ , ‘§ 924(c) covers *some* uses of a firearm’. This interpretive move required, however, the production of another implicature, linked to the question of *which* uses of a firearm were relevant. Scalia held that the broad literal area left by textual analysis

had to be narrowed by looking at what in everyday life and in common sense the idiomatic phrase ‘uses a firearm’ means. Since for the average person on the street, firearms are most often used with some kind of violent or offensive intent, the dissent held that § 924(c) covered uses of this paradigmatic kind, namely any use of a firearm *as a weapon* (brandishing it, discharging it, pistol whipping someone, etc.). Scalia acknowledged that the phrase ‘as a weapon’ appeared nowhere in the statute, but wrote that ‘given our rule that ordinary meaning governs, and given the ordinary meaning of “uses a firearm” [...] is reasonably implicit’ (508 U.S. 223 (1993), p. 244: cf. Neale 2007). He held that, since the ordinary meaning of the phrase ‘uses a firearm’ does not embrace extraordinary employments such as bartering it, his interpretation did not introduce an ‘additional requirement into the text’ that ‘would do violence [...] to the statute’s plain language and structure’, but ‘simply’ construes ‘the text according to its normal import’ (508 U.S. 223 (1993), p. 229). Finally, as regards coherence amongst statutes, Scalia held that, since meaning is contextually shaped, the meaning attributed to words or phrases of a statute is legitimate only for this particular text and in other statutes may lead to anomalous applications.

The decision of the Supreme Court settled the question of bartering guns for drugs, but left some vagueness about whether the mere possession of a firearm could constitute a use of it falling under § 924(c), since possession can embolden the defendant and then further the drug-related crime. Two years later, the Supreme Court had to decide whether a defendant, arrested with 30 g of cocaine in the passenger compartment of his car and a 9-mm pistol in the trunk, was liable to a § 924(c) conviction (*Bailey v. United States*, 516 U.S. 137 (1995)). In this circumstance, the majority stated that evidence of the close placement of the firearm to drugs was not alone sufficient to support a conviction for ‘use’ under the statute. If Congress wanted to criminalize also the mere possession of a firearm by a person who commits a drug offense, it could have included the word ‘possesses’ in the statute. Furthermore, including, via interpretation, the mere possession of a firearm in the uses of a firearm ruled by § 924(c) would have made any role for the statutory word ‘carries’ superfluous. Section 924(c)’s language instead indicated that Congress intended ‘use’ in the active sense of ‘to avail oneself of’, and the statute requires evidence sufficient to show a use that made the firearm an operative factor during and in relation to the predicated crime. Under this reading, ‘use’ included the acts of brandishing, displaying, bartering, striking with, and firing or attempting to fire a firearm, as well as the making of a reference to a firearm in a defendant’s possession, but it did not include mere placement of a firearm for protection at or near the site of a drug crime, nor the nearby concealment of a gun to be at the ready for an imminent confrontation. To reach this conclusion, the majority relied upon implicatures evoked by the text, suggested by the order in which actions falling under (i) were listed. If the text was to be thought of as rational, not redundant and meaningfully ordered, *using* and *carrying a firearm* covered by (i) must be *different* actions linked by a common feature and they must share this feature to a decreasing degree. In fact, who actively uses a firearm, in particular has it in his hands (in order to barter it, to break a window with its handle, to pistol whip, to brandish it,

to discharge it) may convert the firearm to the use for which it was designed more quickly than the person that carries it in such a manner as to be ready for its proper use. After *Bailey*, then, ‘§ 924(c) was not so narrow as to require use as a weapon, but it also was not so broad as to criminalize mere proximity and accessibility; instead the section criminalizes active employment’ (Jaffe 2009, p. 317).

As was said, in 1998, Congress amended the statute adding the words ‘or who, in furtherance of any such crime, possesses a firearm’ and setting enhanced sentences when the firearm is brandished or discharged (B). Let us see what a textual analysis of this current version of the statute leads to as regards the meaning of ‘uses a firearm’.

Provided that the set of actions one can perform using a firearm is limited by the material properties of same, further boundaries on this semantic area are given by implicatures suggested by the language and structure of the text. Since under the same circumstances (i.e. during and in relation to any crime etc.), anyone who discharges a firearm deserves at least 10 years’ imprisonment, anyone who brandishes it 7 years, and anyone who uses or carries or possesses it 5 years, then unless the last minimum mandatory term is simply superfluous, there must be uses of firearms *other than* firing and brandishing them. Further boundaries are then suggested by the articulation of the actions that deserve not fewer than 5 years’ incarceration and by the order in which the text lists them; finally, by the characteristics of actions deserving respectively not fewer than 7 and 10 years’ imprisonment.

If the text is thought of as meaningfully structured and ordered, *using*, *carrying*, and *possessing a firearm* covered by (i) must be different actions linked by a common feature that distinguishes them from both brandishing and firing. This feature can be the fact that in any of these options the firearm is (to decreasing degrees) available for defendants to be used for what it was designed for, but is not used as such. In fact, provided the statutory definition of ‘brandish’, that, ‘for purposes of this subsection’, means ‘to display all or part of the firearm, or otherwise make the presence of the firearm known to another person, in order to intimidate that person, regardless of whether the firearm is directly visible to that person’ (§ 924(c)(2)), it can be inferred that both brandishing and firing are uses of a firearm necessarily linked to its particular potential—that of expelling a projectile by the action of an explosive. For instance, a gun barrel placed on someone’s cheek—use of a firearm falling under (ii) provided the statute definition of ‘brandishing’—is more intimidating than a knife: both are weapons, but the consequences of their use are different. Pistol whipping a dealer in order to knock her out, on the other hand, is a use of the firearm in which the specific potential of the firearm is irrelevant (an iron bar smashed on her head could do even better), so it goes under (i). The same holds for exchanging a firearm for drugs (money could be more practical).

The dichotomy between ‘uses of a firearm *not as* a firearm’ ruled in (i) and ‘uses of a firearm *as a* firearm’ ruled in (ii) and (iii) is supported by an inference suggested by the order in which actions falling under (i) are listed. A person with a firearm in her bag needs more time to get it out to use it as a gun than someone carrying it in such a manner as to be ready for its proper use, and those who actively use the firearm, namely have it in their hands (in order to barter it, to break a window with



its butt, etc.) may convert the firearm to the use for which it was designed even more quickly. The common feature between possessing, carrying and using a firearm not as a gun is the (increasing) availability to the defendant of the firearm. And the fact that these three actions deserve *not fewer* than 5 years' incarceration suggests that interpreters may differently evaluate the degrees of availability for using a firearm as such. Use of a firearm falling under (i), then, is not based on the distinctive features of a firearm (as defined in the statute), but concerns having the gun ready to be used as such more quickly than when merely carrying or possessing it.

As regards the specific uses falling in this class, however, the text is silent. In order to make it sufficiently informative for the question they are called to adjudicate, judges must draw conversational implicatures aimed at preventing violation of the maxim of quantity of information. If the text is informative enough, 'uses a firearm' must mean either 'uses a firearm in *any* way other than brandishing it or discharging it that makes it quickly available for its proper use' or 'uses of the firearm in *some* (relevant) ways other than brandishing it or discharging it that makes it quickly available for its proper use'. Judges can then choose either the implicature  $I_a$  '§ 924(c)(1)A(i) covers *any* conceivable uses of a firearm meant to facilitate *in any way* the crime, except brandishing it or discharging it', or the implicature  $I_b$  '§ 924(c)(1)A(i) covers *some* uses of a firearm except brandishing it or discharging it'. But not only must this implicature be enriched through another implicature linked to the question of *which* uses of a firearm are relevant in (i), but it must also give a reason why these uses of a firearm are grouped together with carrying it or possessing a firearm. If interpreters were to decide that the semantic area left by textual analysis must be narrowed by looking at what in everyday life, the idiomatic phrase 'uses a firearm' means, namely 'uses it with some kind of violent or offensive intent', given the structure of the statute, they should narrow the class of uses falling under (i) to any use of a firearm as a weapon *although not as a gun* (a specific weapon). But what could be in this case the common feature amongst possessing, carrying and using (as a weapon) a firearm? Why pistol whipping someone should deserve the same minimum sentence as going to meet with a dealer with a firearm in one's bag for self defence? The upgrading possibilities left by the phrase 'not less than' do not seem to compensate for the unfairness.

### 3 What the Examples Tell Us

Marmor's conclusion that 'conversational implicatures cannot be frequently relied upon in determining the communicative content of legislative speech' (Marmor 2008, p. 440) means two things. On the one hand, legislators had better not leave what they are committed to express, to conversational implicatures, since they cannot be sure that the provision will be interpreted (applied) as they meant it (Poggi 2011). On the other hand, it means that interpreters, in order to determine ('discover', in Marmor's perspective) the communicative content of a normative

text should not rely upon the information made available by conversational implicatures. The examples previously analysed confirm and question these conclusions at the same time.

The examples show that often interpreters have to complete the meaning of a statute choosing one of the implicatures suggested by the text; their interpretation is legitimate when they succeed in corroborating it following a solid argumentative path. Since interpreters build their interpretation choosing one of the different implicatures made available by the text, they may be said to rely upon (one of) them. However, they would be wrong to consider the implicature they choose as anything more than a mere suggestion, to be strengthened with arguments more solid than those grounding an opposing implicature.

In legislation, the possibility of including disjunctions of conversational implicatures in a text has a pivotal role. These disjunctions make concrete the collective (although not necessarily conscious) deliberation that leaves certain issues undecided, particularly by giving shape to those tacitly acknowledged incomplete decisions that, as Marmor observes, enable legislators to reach a compromise. ‘X says “P” intending to implicate “Q”; Y says “P” in order to communicate “-Q”, X and Y act collectively, *intending their collective speech in saying P* to remain undecided about the implication of Q’ (Marmor 2008, pp. 436–437; cf. also Soames 2009). So, when the legislature enacts a statute suggesting different implicatures, it commits part of the prescriptive content of the norm not to one of these, but to their disjunction. On this view, disjunctions of implicatures that statutes suggest are part of their prescriptive content, which is then indeterminate (or, at least underdetermined). Parts of the text suggesting implicatures are points of the norm at which discretion of the interpreter is, as it were, required or expected (Morra 2010). When legislators committed, at least in most judges’ opinion, to the specific prescriptive content of a specific implicature amongst those made available by the text, they did not imagine that the context not always would impede the production of other implicatures.

Finally, legislators often leave it to conversational implicatures to communicate the purpose they wanted to reach beyond the strictly prescriptive content of the statute. By questioning in which sense the text and its parts provide, in a particular context, sufficient, relevant, ordered, etc., information for the communicative goal, interpreters gain a deeper understanding of the statute and of the concerns its formulation is meant to allay. The examples showed that parts of the statutes are often cancellations of particular implicatures amongst those suggested by the previous generic (laconic) formulation. The complex role conversational implicatures play in normative texts and in their interpretation calls for a different approach to statutory interpretation than that of Marmor, namely, for an approach in which the worry that interpreters facing different possible conversational implicatures lack criteria for discovering which of them ‘ought to prevail’ (Marmor 2008, p. 437) is seen as a false problem, and in which the real normative stance of conversational implicatures—as nuances of meaning that interpreters are authorized to infer from the text in the context of interpretation (Saul 2002; Sbisà 2007)—is recognised.

## 4 Implicatures in a Con-textualistic Approach

The role and use of implicatures in statutes may be framed against a theoretical background different from that of Marmor, namely a background in which legal interpretation is not a matter of discovering a meaning, but rather of building it. Considering legal interpretation primarily as an epistemic activity, Marmor compares it to the interpretive activity familiar from ordinary cooperative exchanges of information, and then concludes that the maxims worked out by Grice for this specific kind of conversation cannot work in for statutes. But stepping outside such a positivist framework and recognising the volitional nature of legal interpretation (see, amongst others, Chiassoni 1999; Poggi 2008; Morra 2010), this activity should rather be compared with the interpretation happening in strategic communicative exchanges, for which, in its general meaning, Grice's theory applies as well.

Grice's theory suggests that also in interpretation, humans display the a priori tendency to categorize the manifold possibilities they face along four different lines which Kant (after Aristotle) called quality, quantity, relation, and modality. In verbal interaction, speakers exploit this tendency to enrich the meaning of their utterances, but this communicative strategy works only when all speakers respect a general principle, which Grice called the 'principle of cooperation', whose definition, generic as regards the kind of interaction, is 'make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged' (Grice 1989, p. 41). Although the maxims through which this generic principle is made concrete extend generally along the Kantian categories of quantity, quality, etc., it is the conversational context that shapes their substance and use. Grice sketched the form the general interpretive strategy assumes in a cooperative and transparent exchange of information, so he detailed the four maxims in a way functional to this particular 'interpretive game' (Chiassoni 1999). In these circumstances, conversational maxims which speakers may be presumed by listeners to comply with (and then exploit for inferentially enriching the literal meaning of utterances) are the following: (a) do not make your contribution more or less informative than is required for the current purposes of the exchange; (b) do not say what you believe to be false or that for which you lack adequate evidence; (c) make your contribution relevant to the conversation; (d) avoid obscurity of expression, ambiguity, unnecessary prolixity, and be orderly. Conjecturing that a message has been produced in this cooperative spirit, interpreters draw inferences about the information necessary for making it adequate to the purpose of the exchange from the point of view of quantity, quality, etc. convenient for the kind of information which is exchanged.

Furthermore, Grice thought his theory could be extended, with adjustments, to other forms of communication than pure cooperative exchanges of information, these being, by the way, rather rare in 'ordinary conversations'. If maxims are context-sensitive in the sense just seen, those admitted in the context of legal interpretation (a strategic interpretive game) may well be different from those detailed by Grice for a game in which reciprocal sincerity of speakers and consideration of their

communicative intentions are necessary conditions. The four maxims detailed by Grice must be considered as only one of the multifarious possible instances of an abstract principle of cooperation that is made concrete in every kind of communicative interaction in which speakers share a purpose, however minimal. Legislatures and judges have a minimal common aim, enacting law, but even if the ways in which each party to the conversation respectively understands the relationship between legislative and adjudicative institutions were so different that it would be impossible to individuate any commonality between them, as Marmor holds (Marmor 2008, pp. 438–442), the ‘conversation’ between the parties can, nevertheless, be said to be cooperative, because even when the common objective the parties share is only that of reaching their respective divergent targets, they must coordinate some of their actions in order to reach these targets.

In legal interpretation, the point of coordination is the text of the statute, namely the open range of interpretations it allows in various contexts. Licensing a normative text, members of the collective agency called legislature not only recognise that its formulation mirrors their communicative intentions, but they (more or less implicitly) authorize it to suggest not only the implicatures they meant when they subscribed to it but every implicature it can suggest in any context of interpretation (which they cannot know a priori). Accepting this point of coordination, each legislator acknowledges, more or less implicitly, that the judges’ job is not to infer what the legislature meant, but what the text means. For their part, interpreters accept that the text represents, albeit against the background of a multiplicity of varying contextual factors, a ‘formal’ container for their interpretations. So, the fact that in the special kind of conversation taking place between legislature and judges no cooperative principle such as the one articulated by Grice can be said to hold (Poggi 2011), does not mean that it lacks any form of coordination. As Butler (this volume) says, although legislative activity and legal interpretation both entail a good amount of strategic behaviour, such behaviour ‘takes place’ and ‘can be effective’ only ‘in a greater context’ in which the possibility of using various types of strategic action is contemplated; it is controlled, although not determined, by different canons of legal interpretation that may well lead to divergent outcomes, but nevertheless, together with legal training supplied in law schools and professional habits practiced by members of the legal profession, efficiently constrain interpretations.

In the conversation between legislature and judges, then, a particular instance of a principle of cooperation may be said to hold. Instantiations of this principle being sensitive to the purpose of the communicative exchange, the principle underlying legal interpretation can well be different from the one articulated by the maxims laid down by Grice for cooperative exchange of information, not least because the quantity, relation, manner, and, most of all, the quality of information relevant for prescriptions may be different from those relevant in assertions. As Soames says, ‘the legislative process is governed by purposes that transcend, and sometimes conflict with, the conversational ideal of the efficient and cooperative exchange of information. Consequently, the way in which Gricean maxims, which are based on this ideal, contribute to filling the gap between the meaning and content of legal texts

may, in some cases, differ from their contribution to filling similar gaps in ordinary conversations' (Soames 2009, p. 420).

Maxims of interpretation operative in this game should be influenced by the way in which the legislature and judges coordinate their actions. For Marmor, drawing 'some conclusions about the maxims that would apply to legislative speeches from the nature and objective of such communicative interactions' may be possible in principle, but it is difficult (Marmor 2008, p. 438), for instance because 'the question of whether we should take into account, and to what extent, the particular intentions of a legal-political authority in interpreting its directives, depends on one's views about the legitimacy of such authorities, and their moral-political rationale' (ibid., p. 439). But in the specific kind of cooperation that holds between legislature and interpreter, legislators' intentions are substantially irrelevant for interpretation, as opposed to what happens in collaborative exchanges of information, especially in face-to-face conversations. For conversational parties replying to each other, seizing the implicatures suggested by an utterance on the intention of who produced it, may prove an efficient strategy for communication: the speaker's intention may show itself in the following turns, in which someone may contest the implicature chosen by her interlocutors for her utterance, and produce another utterance excluding it<sup>14</sup>. In contrast, judges' interpretations do not form a dialogue, even at a distance, with the text produced by the legislature: an interpretation can well be considered a response to the legislature's utterance, but no rejoinder is contemplated. The legislature does not and cannot countenance single interpretations, at least not at the individual level: it can produce another text, eventually cancelling some of the possible implicatures it previously made available, but the procedure to arrive at this outcome excludes that the amendment can be considered an answer to a particular interpretation (nor can it have any effect on it). Since communication between the legislature and interpreters is one-way, it is not prejudiced by the fact that interpreters conjecture communicative intentions different from those meant by legislators, if these conjectures are (con)textually grounded. At any rate, it is a rule of cooperation between the legislature and judges that the legislators' intention is just one of the parameters along which a statutory interpretation may be built, a parameter that judges can consider subsidiary when this proves functional to their purposes, provided they can show the reasonableness of their methodological choice.

However, the fact that all legislators, although often implicitly, affirm through their signature the intent of transferring to the text of the statute their own communicative intentions implies that the legislature can be said a priori to be a speaker who has (at least) one determinate collective communicative intention; hence, the first minimal condition for conversational implicature to arise is met. As regards the second condition for implicatures to arise, the text represents the contextual factor shared by the parties to the conversation. Which conversational maxims (known to be) followed by each participant apply to this cooperative kind of communicative

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<sup>14</sup> In other words, in these contexts, Gricean maxims may be thought of as mainly aimed at understanding the intention of the speaker, because these kind of exchanges are acts of communication that succeed 'if, and only if the hearer recognizes [the speaker's] intention' (Marmor 2005, p. 21).

exchange, as Marmor says, is more complicated to figure out. Interpretive maxims admitted in statutory interpretation are multifarious, divergent<sup>15</sup> and equally legitimate, and any hierarchy amongst them designated by different theories of statutory interpretation is never mandatory, so neither legislators nor judges can know which maxim their ‘interlocutors’ will follow (or have followed). Nevertheless, both parties know a priori that the other will follow some maxim: judges can presume the text was produced following some maxim; legislators can presume judges will follow some maxim in interpreting the statute.

Provided that even in this particular cooperative game there are, in theory, the conditions for which conversational implicatures may arise, speaker and interpreters make an ‘asymmetrical’ use of them.<sup>16</sup> Legislators approve a statute having in mind rational interpreters (Dascal 2003), but since they may only presume that judges will be cooperative, and not that, interpreting the text, they will consider any other speaker’s intentions apart from the collective one abovementioned, they cannot rely upon determinate implicatures for nuancing the meaning of the statute the way they want. They can presume that the statutes enacted will be interpreted rationally, but they can have little or no idea about what ‘rational’ will mean. On the other hand, judges can rely upon the implicatures the text makes available: they are allowed to make inferences as regards the information necessary for making the text cooperative, because it is as such that the legislature consigned it to them, and it is as such that they accepted it. Licensing a statute, the collective agency called the legislature consigns its text to interpreters as a unit of meaning produced by a single coherent speaker, even if its genesis makes it impossible for it to be really so; conversely, interpreters, accepting a priori the text as such, gain the possibility of building its meaning in a way rational to their ends, provided that they show that their interpretation saves some of the characteristics that make the statute a text (cohesion, coherence, etc.). As Dascal says, the fact that interpreters build their interpretation by appealing, though not necessarily consciously, to a personal ideal of a ‘rational lawmaker’ is one of the necessary background communicative assumptions for legal interpretation practice to function effectively, the possibility of attributing intentions to the legislature being granted by the fact that the legislators had at least one collective intention—which explains why this practice ‘is subject to rationality assumptions’ (Dascal 2003, p. 338) similar to those delineated by Grice. Interpreters are free to build the meaning of a statute by projecting onto it the notion of rationality they think most appropriate in the context, but they cannot but conceive an enacted legal text as bearing a (coherent) communicative message.<sup>17</sup> This

<sup>15</sup> Even the Gricean maxims are potentially in conflict with each other and give opposite results in some cases.

<sup>16</sup> The implicature mechanism works also outside ‘a realm of speech that is largely cooperative’ (Butler, this volume).

<sup>17</sup> As Neale (2007, p. 51) says, ‘a statute is treated—not by choice, but because there is no alternative if the concept of a statute is to be intelligible—as if it were a purposive statement made by a person or a group of persons’.

explains why in their tasks they often use maxims very similar to those coined by Grice for cooperative exchanges of information.

This approach to legal interpretation, notwithstanding the centrality it attributes to the text, differs from ‘new textualism’. Although it considers the text actually licensed by the legislature the ‘objective’ matter on which judges base their interpretation, it holds as well that this text has meaning only when it is interpreted, so it cannot be considered as a static entity. Even if it contained no areas of ambiguity, the boundaries of its meaning are closed by the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features of the text, which vary in time, because syntax, semantics and pragmatics of (legal) language change constantly, although at different speeds. Furthermore, and in this the approach differs also from those softer versions of textualism which take a more pragmatic, eclectic approach to the interpretation of statutes and adopt an enriched approach to language (cf. Solan 2005), our approach does not consider the discretionary power of judges in interpretation as an inconvenient necessity, to be limited as much as possible, but as a pillar of legal interpretation. In line with Chiassoni (1999) and Dascal (2003), it distinguishes two kinds or phases of legal interpretation,<sup>18</sup> a first one in which pragmatics leads the interpretive processing and a second one, again prompted by contextual factors, in which interpreters endorse a more logico-semantic approach and analytically disassemble the statute in order to work out all its possible meanings relevant for the interpretive situation.<sup>19</sup>

In the first phase, interpreters facing a statute do not resort to pragmatic considerations only when the semantic content they recover proves insufficient for determining a legal outcome: quite the opposite, pragmatic inferences shape their interpretation from the start (Dascal 2003; Morra 2010; Butler, this volume). A pragmatic recognition always precedes any conclusion about semantics, thus entailing that it is through contextual-pragmatic considerations that interpreters choose the most promising from the set of possible meanings of the wording of the statute (Morra 2010). Since interpreters share by education and habit the same legal environment in which ‘highly structured and specifically legal rationality assumptions’ and constructed practices constrain interpretation within ‘practicable bounds’

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<sup>18</sup> For Chiassoni (1999, p. 95), legal interpretation is ‘a standard reinterpretative game: a game where the interpretive process may be conceived as a two-stages process, characterised by interpreters’ bound inference with the outcome of the first-interpretation stage’. ‘The second stage [of interpretation] should be understood as a complex, multilayered, or multiple-stages stage, where interpreters do apply in turn to the same sentence several interpretive criteria, or the same criteria repeatedly, and resort to criteria-ordering and outcomes-ordering rules, if any, until they reach an outcome they deem, at once, viable and satisfactory’ (Chiassoni 1999, p. 91).

<sup>19</sup> This two-stage model of (legal) interpretation differs from that of Marmor, which distinguishes between an understanding stage and an interpretive stage. For Marmor, there are ‘easy cases’ where the law can be simply understood, and applied straightforwardly, and ‘hard cases’, where the issue is not determined by the existing legal standards. Understanding is considered as an unreflective process the outcome of which is determined by linguistic rules, and interpretation proves necessary only when the (simple) understanding of a sentence does not point to a determinate meaning. In the approach endorsed here, easy or clear cases are those cases for which the first interpretation proves sufficient: a second interpretation proves not necessary, since the outcome of the first one is not contested.

(Butler, this volume), it is unsurprising that they often produce convergent interpretations of the same statute. At any rate, this first kind of interpretation proves sufficient only when a meaning is not contested in the particular occurrence of interpretation (the case the judge is called upon to decide). Unless this happens, its outcome—the initially ‘computed’ meaning—is considered unproblematic: taking a word’s use as clear, therefore, is an interpretive conclusion arrived at via a pragmatic move, in which it has been determined that in the particular case at stake no reasons have been advanced for rejecting this ‘convergent’ use (clarity is then not a prerogative of the language of the statutes, but a characteristic eventually projected on them by the context of interpretation).

When aspects of the legal context signal reasons for inferring a lack of transparency of the meaning of a statute, namely whenever its wording is disputed in a court of law, legal interpreters do the same thing that ‘ordinary’ readers do when they realize they do not understand a text: they look again at the statute text and start to disassemble and reassemble it to make a different meaning out of it (Sbisà 2007). This second interpretation, triggered when the first one turns problematic, namely when the ‘direct understanding’ of the statute proves ‘not sufficient for the communicative purpose at hand’, puts to work ‘a heuristics for generating and checking alternative interpretations’ mainly based on a search for so-called indirect meaning, and lasts until an interpretation ‘clear enough’ for settling the case at stake is reached: once again a pragmatically grounded decision (Dascal 2003, pp. 330–335). Its starting points are (legal) definitions of the (combination of) words the statute contains and the syntactic/pragmatic rules of their combination, because they are the more ‘objective’ factors in the sense that they are those that change more slowly and can be considered basic, being shared by all legal interpreters discussing a particular case. In this second kind of interpretation, then, as opposed to the first, ‘the first and most important step [...] is not moral, social or political, but linguistic’ (Soames 2009, p. 420).

As opposed to what happens in everyday speech, during the second kind of interpretation, judges (and legal interpreters in general) employ extra time for processing the text and can devote to it an increased processing effort, which is justified by the extra cognitive effects they may gain through it (Chevallier et al. 2008). All these factors encourage interpreters to explore all possible readings of the text, in other words prompt the production of all possible pragmatic inferences (relevant in the context). This is illustrated by the disjunction examined in Sect. 2.2 (d). In the first interpretation, interpreters always choose the meaning of the words, following a pragmatic recognition that considers also their interpretive expectations. It is then the context of interpretation that suggests whether the inclusive or the exclusive reading of ‘or’ is most probable (or affordable with less processing effort): reading it as inclusive or exclusive is then possible only after having made a choice based on the semantic-pragmatic background. As was said, the phraseology adopted in statutes suggests an exclusive reading of the ‘or’ as the most promising. So, while the inclusive reading of ‘or’ may well be the first and ‘lower’ cost choice in ordinary conversations (Chevallier et al. 2008), in that context of interpretation it could require an extra pragmatic effort. At any rate, during a second interpretation, expectation-oriented interpretation is suspended, and disjunction is considered



neutral as regards its interpretation (Soames 2009), namely neither mandating nor precluding an exclusive interpretation. The extra time legal interpreters have for processing the text and the extra cognitive effects they may gain by making this extra effort encourage them to explore both readings of ‘or’ through the pragmatic process of enrichment.

In the second interpretation, distinguishing between what the statute says and what it implies is important even if clear boundaries between the two factors of meaning cannot be clearly drawn. This is important, not because the pragmatic enrichment suggested by conversational implicatures should be severed from what the legislature said, and then ignored, as Marmor holds,<sup>20</sup> but because what the legislature prescribes in producing a statute can be determined only by enriching this content through pragmatic considerations. Knowing ‘how semantics and pragmatics interact to generate content’ (Soames 2009, p. 420) is important in order to best explore limits and possibilities of interpretation. The second interpretation examines precisely the multifarious possibilities of pragmatic enrichment beyond what is explicitly said which the text leaves open to interpreters, and these implicatures constitute the very area in which different interpretations can be built. This is not to say that pragmatics makes the law when the law has no clear answer for a case; on the contrary, since legal interpretation is an activity that essentially entails discretion on the interpreters’ part in the meaning-making procedure, moral and political values and beliefs embedded in contextual information are amongst the factors that shape all interpretation, both the first and the second. But the disjunctions of implicatures that statutes leave at the interpreters’ disposal make different interpretations possible, and, provided that they can be equally grounded, the only parameter left for interpreters to use in choosing amongst them is their own moral or political preference towards one (or some) of them. Through implicatures, the law can be said to offer a clear answer to cases that turn ‘hard’: interpreters have the right to choose from amongst the implicatures made available by the text the one that best suits their preferences, provided that they base their work on a legitimate interpretation. Disjunctions of implicatures suggested by the text are points at which the law *requires* that judges’ preferences enter interpretation. So, there is a sense in which what the law prescribes is exactly what it says, provided that this includes the disjunction of implicatures suggested by the text.

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<sup>20</sup> As Butler (this volume) says, for Marmor, the basic idea to investigate is where and when a ‘pragmatic enrichment’ of given syntax and semantics could be taken to form, or not to form, part of what is actually determined by legal expressions. For Marmor, ‘what a speaker says on the occasion of speech is the content which is determined by the syntax and semantics of the expression uttered’ (Marmor 2008, p. 425).

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**Part III**  
**Discourse**

# Cultural Discourse Analysis: Pragmatics of Social Interaction

Donal Carbaugh

**Abstract** This chapter addresses issues of pragmatics and culture by presenting a framework for the cultural analysis of discourse which has been explicated and used in previous literature (e.g., Berry 2009; Carbaugh 1988a, 1990, 2005; Carbaugh et al. 1997; Scollo 2011). Indebted to the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1972), and interpretive anthropology (Geertz 1973), this particular analytic procedure is one implementation of the theory of communication codes (Carbaugh, 2005; Philipsen 1997; Philipsen et al. 2005). As such, it takes pragmatic communication to be not only its primary data but, moreover, its primary theoretical concern. The framework responds to specific research questions, addresses particular kinds of intellectual problems, includes five investigative modes, and uses a special set of concepts. In this chapter, each of the modes is discussed as analytically distinct, yet complementary to the others, including theoretical, descriptive, interpretive, comparative, and critical analyses. Special attention is given to the interpretive mode and to intercultural interactions as a site for the application and development of cultural discourse analysis.

**Keywords** Societal pragmatics · Pragmatics and culture · Comparative analysis

Studies of intercultural pragmatics have sought recently to bring together important insights, including the cultural shaping of communication practices, its nonverbal features (e.g., Milburn 2000; Scollo 2004; Wilkins 2005), competence (Witteborn 2003), and the interactional dynamics that occur among culturally shaped practices, including cultural notions of respect (e.g., Bailey 2000; Mackenzie and Wallace

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2011). This chapter is an explication of one particular approach for creating these insights, cultural discourse analysis (CuDA).<sup>1</sup>

CuDA raises the general questions: How is pragmatic action shaped as a cultural practice? Specific questions may focus upon acts, events, and styles of communication that people use when conducting their everyday lives, including their practical rhetorical arts (Carbaugh and Wolf 1999; Townsend 2004, 2006). Whatever the particular phenomena of concern, the inquiry explores what people in particular places make of communication when practiced in their own way, when understood on their own terms, through their own explanations. The basic question is: How is pragmatic communication conducted, conceived, and evaluated in this place among these people? Investigations designed to respond to these questions help us understand the local shapes and forms communication takes, such as a Chinese version of “pure talk” (Garrett 1993), loathing the “sucker” role in Israel (Bloch 2003), a Puerto Rican view of time (Milburn 2000, 2002), or suppressing an East Asian identity in specific interactional contexts (Hastings 2000). Investigations also can tackle the complexities of intercultural interactions between racial, ethnic, and national styles of engagement (e.g., Carbaugh 1990a, b, 2005).

A related question asks: What system of symbolic meanings or what cultural commentary is immanent in the pragmatics of communication? When people are engaged in communication, what significance and meaning does it have for them? When addressed, analyses delve into the deep meanings that are active in communication practices, and how these are part of a practical way of living? Inquiry proceeds in order to hear the rich symbolic texture, the presumed view of the symbolic world that is presumed in order to communicate in this way.

These general research questions about the cultural nature and the meanings of communication are based upon the view that communication both presumes and constitutes social realities; and further, that as people communicate, so they engage in a meta-cultural commentary; that is, they (and we) say things explicitly and implicitly about who they are, how they are related to each other, how they feel, what they are doing, and how they are situated in the nature of things. These latter concerns about identity, relationships, emotions, actions, and dwelling, respectively, are central concepts in CuDA, and are elaborated below.

## 1 A Brief Summary of Cultural Discourse

CuDA is a particular way of investigating communication ethnographically. It is indebted to the Hymesian program of work (Hymes 1972; Philipsen and Carbaugh 1986), while standing at the juncture of the theories of cultural communication

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<sup>1</sup> The acronym CuDA is used to identify cultural discourse analysis as distinct from critical discourse analysis (e.g., Fairclough and Wodak 1997) and from conversation analysis. It is distinct from the former as it insists on phases of descriptive, interpretive, and comparative analysis prior to critical assessments; and from the latter in its emphasis on interpretive and cross-cultural analyses.

(Philipsen 1987, 2002) and communication codes (see Philipsen 1997, 2005). The program of work focuses inquiries on communication as a practice and culture as emergent in practices; special attention is given to interpreting the deeply meaningful commentary that is intelligible to participants as part of their ongoing social life.

The concept, cultural discourse, has therefore been used systematically to organize ways of understanding how culture is an integral part, and a product of discourse systems. The concept has been focused from the beginning on the reciprocal relationship between discourses of personhood and communication, with these discourses being understood, like intercultural interactions, to be multidimensional, polysemic, deeply situated, and complex functional accomplishments (Carbaugh 1988a, esp. pp. 177–184). Focused on discursive dynamics, cultural discourse has been defined as a historically transmitted expressive system of communication practices, acts, events, and styles, which are composed of specific symbols, symbolic forms, norms, and their meanings (see Carbaugh et al. 1997). How analysts can describe, and subsequently interpret communication practices, that is, how analysts identify the cultural features of acts, events, and styles of communication, is the focus of what follows.

Some readers are undoubtedly familiar with other approaches to pragmatics, communication, conversation, and discourse. CuDA, as an approach, is distinct from but complements, for example, two well-known others, conversation analysis (CA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Like CA, CuDA is based on careful descriptive analyses of actual instances of social interaction, but unlike CA, CuDA not only identifies but interprets the cultural meaningfulness of, and comparatively analyses the cultural features of, conversational sequences. Like CDA, CuDAs can employ critical inquiry, but formulates the locus of critical inquiry only after careful descriptive and interpretive modes of analysis. As such, CuDA is a general approach that carves out specific empirical or analytical problems which, when addressed, help decipher the cultural features in discourses, especially as these are at play in everyday scenes of communication.

## 2 Three Specific Research Questions or Problems

The general research questions introduced above focus on the cultural analyses of discourse on specific communication practices, as well as on the significance and importance of those practices to people who use them. Analyses of a cultural discourse can proceed in any number of ways, and can respond to any number of specific research problems, focusing on one or some combination of the following. Three specific and typical research questions, in no particular order, are:

1. The question of functional accomplishment: What is getting done when people communicate in this way?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The concept, function, here is used in the pragmatic tradition of John Dewey, capturing what is done in conjoint action; it is not being used in the functionalist sense of Talcott Parsons' sociology.

As people use discourse, they can of course accomplish any number of things. The focus here is on the pragmatic accomplishments from the view of the participant's conduct, their actions, and their sense of what they are doing. For example, as we use discourse, we can create a deep sense of who we are (see Mackenzie 2005), thereby cultivating a sense of membership in a group (e.g., Milburn 2000, 2002). We can engage in various types of wit and humor (see Garrett 1993; Ojha 2003; Scollo 2007). We can contest other ways of doing things, thus creating a counter discourse, asserting one way as opposed to another or others (Carbaugh and Rudnick 2006). CuDAs can be designed to explore what is getting done when people communicate, with these various accomplishments being linked to issues of identity, action, emotion, relationships, and dwelling in nature.

2. The question of structure: How is this communication practice put together? What are its main cultural ingredients, elements, or features?

The focus here is on cultural structures, specific terms and phrases, which are deeply felt, commonly intelligible, and widely accessible to participants (Carbaugh 1988b). What words have the status of symbols, thereby capturing a deep sense of who we are, or who we are with (or against), or what we are doing, or how we are feeling, or where we are? How are these being used by people in their routine social life? For example, a popular American vocabulary uses words like "self" and "sharing feelings," the former identifying persons, the latter a kind of communicative action. How do these terms structure social interaction, and what meanings do they have for participants? A particular kind of term, terms for talk and communication generally, has been especially productive as a focus for cultural explorations (see, e.g., Baxter 1993; Poutiainen 2005; Scollo 2004). Every system of cultural discourse has parts of it which identify people, actions, emotions, and so on. When are terms such as these used, and what deep meanings are being created with them?

3. The question of cultural sequencing, or form (in the Burkean sense): What act sequence constitutes this communication practice? Or, in turn, of what larger sequence is this act a part?

The theory of cultural communication (Philipsen 1987) has proposed the forms of ritual, myth, and social drama as generic cultural forms of communication. These forms have been tremendously heuristic in subsequent studies (e.g., Carbaugh 1996; Fitch 1998; Katriel 2004). Other forms, less generic but significant, have also been examined, such as agonistic discourses and vacillating forms of identity talk (Carbaugh 1996). More recently, Scollo (2007) has presented a fine-grained and detailed explication of the communicative form through which people retrieve texts from the media in their routine social interactions. The idea behind each is that social interaction is creatively composed through sequential forms, or interactional sequences, which have cultural integrity, from greetings to joking sessions, to good-byes. What is that sequence? What are the acts that constitute it? The cultural nature of this sequencing process is of special interest to cultural discourse analysts (see, e.g., Carbaugh 2005; Hastings 2001).

Specific questions as these may be posed about any communication practice. When treated as a part of a cultural discourse, we may ask, then, about its interac-

tional accomplishments, its structural features, and its sequential organization. Each can give the analyst a specific sense of the cultural functions, structures, and forms which discourse takes when conceived, evaluated, and used by people in particular places.

### 3 Five Basic Modes of Inquiry

A mode of inquiry is a particular stance an analyst takes in order to accomplish an integral part of a research project. The theoretical, descriptive, interpretive, comparative, and critical modes of inquiry are discussed below. Each has its own grammar and logic; each enables the analyst to make specific kinds of claims that are important ingredients in cultural research (such as conceptualizing the phenomena of interest, describing instances of it, interpreting the meaningfulness of those phenomena to participants, examining the phenomena in comparative perspective, and evaluating the phenomena, respectively); each accomplishes specific tasks that the others do not. Of these, the first three—the theoretical, the descriptive, and the interpretive—are necessary for a CuDA, while the last two are possible, if not always necessary. All modes can lead back to reflections upon the theoretical mode, asking whether it has been adequate for the purposes at hand.<sup>3</sup>

The modes are discussed, below, in an order which reflects a weak linear design in CuDA, implying that theorizing a phenomenon occurs before describing it, and the like. However, the investigative process is also a cyclical one. Moving through one mode such as the descriptive can lead back to deeper reflections about others (e.g., a more robust theory). Taken together, then, the five modes, when implemented as parts of a research project, can create a powerful approach to the study of communication.

#### 3.1 *The Theoretical Mode*

The theoretical mode responds to the question: What is the perspective of, and conceptual problem being addressed by, this study (see Carbaugh and Hastings 1992)? The task is to explicate the basic theoretical orientation taken to the study, and the specific conceptual framework guiding the inquiry. Hymes' framework (1972) and/or Philipsen's (1997) speech codes theory provide typical guiding orientations for CuDA. In addition to the general orientation, specific frameworks may help focus inquiry on particular phenomena such as intercultural asynchrony (Wilkins 2007), structuring norms, indigenous frames (Carbaugh 1990a, b), environmental discourse (Morgan 2003, 2007), organizational dynamics (Milburn 2009), and interpersonal relationships (Fitch 1998; Poutiainen 2005). The general task for the analyst is refin-

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<sup>3</sup> This point introduces the cyclical quality of this research design, as well as the analyst's critical reflection on the perspective taken to the inquiry. These points are discussed in much more detail elsewhere (Carbaugh and Hastings 1992).



ing the sense of how one hears culture in discourse—as in a speech community or code—and how one understands, conceptually, the basic communication phenomena of concern. Engaging in these tasks equips the analyst with an abstract and theoretical understanding of communication and its phenomena, typically prior to fieldwork. Put differently, the task here is to formulate an “etic” understanding in Pike’s sense. This framework is used, then, heuristically, to guide subsequent descriptive and interpretive analyses. (This chapter demonstrates the theoretical mode, in writing, as it explicates CuDA as a conceptual framework for communication studies.)

### 3.2 *The Descriptive Mode*

The descriptive mode responds to the question: What actually happened as a practice of communication? Can the analyst present and investigate actual instances of the phenomenon of concern? After entering a field site, the analyst explores specific communication acts, events, or styles which can be, and subsequently are, recorded. Here, the analyst is taking great care to ground the study in actual strips of real-world phenomena, empirically available, creating a descriptive corpus of multiple instances for study. Preferred data are typically video and audio recordings of actual everyday life or words and images which are not manipulated by the analyst. The former are typically transcribed through some formal transcription system, so the analyst can establish what exactly is of concern to the study. For example, the following transcript was created as part of a study of intercultural encounters among Finnish (i.e., Kirsti) and American participants (i.e., Mary):

1. Mary: Hi Kirsti!!! How are you?
2. Kirsti: Thank you, good.
3. Mary: Are you enjoying your stay?
4. Kirsti: Yes, very much.
5. Mary: It’s a beautiful (!) day outside isn’t it?
6. Kirsti: Yes.
7. They talk for a while longer, then say “Goodbye.”

Transcripts as this one help establish for the analyst and for readers what exactly is being studied as a communication practice. Recording instances of a phenomenon on paper (or increasingly on disc) helps make known to others the basic materials of concern to a study. Without this “toehold” in social reality, it is sometimes difficult to assess what discourse, or discursive feature, is indeed being studied.

### 3.3 *The Interpretive Mode*

The interpretive mode responds to the question: What is the significance and importance of a phenomenon to participants? Or, in other words, what meanings are active in a particular communication practice? The task here is to provide an interpretive

account of the practice, identifying the premises of belief and value that are active when one does such a thing. What needs to be presumed, or understood, in order for this kind of communication practice to be intelligible here? For example, in the above sequence between Kirsti and Mary, what meaning does enacting this sequence have, and what—if any—future obligations are being formed by participating in it? We find that this varies in different cultural discourses (Carbaugh 2005). Or, similarly, why are there moments of silence in some social interactions, and what meanings do these hold? We know that the uses and interpretations of silence vary across cultural contexts such that Blackfeet, Finnish, and popular American renderings are indeed distinct (Acheson 2008; Braithwaite 1997; Carbaugh 2005; Covarrubias 2007). We will elaborate on the interpretive mode (below Sect. 4).

### 3.4 *The Comparative Mode*

The comparative mode asks: How is this communication practice like and unlike similar others in other cultural discourses, or in other speech communities? The task of a comparative analysis carries in two directions. On the one hand, by placing two communication practices side by side, the analyst can identify what is similar in them, for example, that greetings are exchanged through forms of mutual recognition, but that these are conducted very differently. For example, in the example above, recognition occurs through the use of a first name by Mary but not Kirsti; Mary mentions an obvious topic such as the weather but Kirsti does not; Kirsti presumes a degree of relational importance in the exchange that Mary does not, and so on. Comparative analyses, especially of intercultural interactions, help explore specific phenomena such as accounts (Toyosaki 2003), what is similar across communication practices like these in different societies, and helps establish what is culturally distinctive in each.

### 3.5 *The Critical Mode*

The critical mode responds to the question: Does this practice advantage some more than others? What is the relative worth of this practice among participants? The task is to evaluate the practice from some ethical juncture, making explicit what that juncture is, and what standard of judgment is being used. I have written extensively about the critical mode as it has been used in various ethnographic studies (Carbaugh 1989/1990) and have illustrated it in various research reports (Carbaugh 2005; Carbaugh and Rudnick 2006).

It is important to emphasize the place of critical inquiry within CuDA. There is the commitment in CuDA to describe and interpret a communication practice from the view of participants, prior to its critical appraisal.<sup>4</sup> In this way, the analyst estab-

<sup>4</sup> Of course, there is the special case where participants themselves are critiquing the practices through which they communicate (see Carbaugh 1989/1990).

lishes a deep understanding of the phenomenon of concern, from the view of those engaged in it, prior to evaluating it. Put differently, the analyst engages deeply in descriptive and interpretive analyses as a way of gaining perspective on the importance, salience, or relevance of critical cultural inquiry.

The investigative procedure of raising these questions and using these five modes of inquiry to respond to them creates a systematic way in which to conduct CuDAs. Suggested are these six ingredients in cultural research: (1) careful attention to the research questions and problems of concern, (2) reflection upon how the analyst understands discourse and discursive phenomena theoretically, (3) focused descriptive explorations of phenomena of concern, (4) interpretations of the meaningfulness of those phenomena to participants, (5) comparative assessments of such phenomena across discourses or communities, and, if warranted, (6) a critical appraisal. Each mode accomplishes important parts of the analysis, with the procedure generally providing for a holistic stance for understanding cultural discourse.

#### 4 An Elaboration of the Interpretive Mode

How does an analyst conduct an interpretive inquiry of cultural discourse? The discussion, here, following the analytic procedure above, presumes that the analyst has theorized the phenomenon of interest, and created a descriptive record of it. The descriptive record is being analyzed, or has been analyzed, in order to identify a communication practice, and/or cultural theme. After doing at least some of this work, the analyst can examine that record and ask: What is the significance and importance of this to participants? What meanings does this practice hold for participants? Note that this is an analyst's question, NOT necessarily an interview question. There is a difference between analyzing meanings-in-practice, as part of ongoing social interaction, and analyzing participants' reports about that practice. Each involves different orders of data, the former being an *enactment of the practice*, the latter a *report about it*. While these can complement each other, they can also diverge. A participant can deny some interpretations of a practice, even though those interpretations are robust in social interaction. If this is the case, that is, a discursive practice has competing meanings, some amplified while others are being muted, the analyst wants to know this! The range of active meanings in and about the practice is thus the target of the interpretive analysis.

It is important to emphasize the interpretive task before the analyst: While engaging in a communication practice, an analyst seeks to understand what range of meanings is active in that practice, when it is getting done. The analyst sets out to interpret this practice, what is being presumed by participants for it to be what it is, that is, to understand the meta-cultural commentary immanent in it. What all does this practice have to say?

In order to respond to these questions, and to develop this point, I want to elaborate two general concerns. One is a framework for analyzing the semantic content of cultural discourses. The other is a vocabulary used for formulating those contents.

#### 4.1 *The Semantic Content of Cultural Discourses: Hubs and Radiants of Meaning*

CuDA treats meaning as an ongoing commentary that is active in actual communication practices. In other words, as people communicate with each other, they are saying things literally about the specific subject being discussed, but they are also saying things culturally, about who they are, how they are related, what they are doing together, how they feel about what is going on, and about the nature of things. These cultural meanings—about personhood, relationships, action, emotion, and dwelling, respectively—are formulated in CuDAs as “radiants” which stem from a “hub of cultural meaning.” For example, as they say things explicitly in terms of identity such as “Bob is a priest,” they are also saying things implicitly about relationships, actions, and feelings. In this case, identity terms serve as a hub of meaning with the others—meanings about relationships, actions, feelings—radiating from it. We know from the ethnographic literature about communication that these primary semantic dimensions of culture are actively a part of communication practices (e.g., Witteborn 2007). It is the rendering of these interactional radiants or semantic hubs, the explication of this ongoing meta-cultural commentary, which is the task of interpretive analysis.

The radiants discussed below provide a way of structuring the interpretive analysis. The objective is to render an enriched reading of the meanings in a way that does not simply replicate and parrot what has been said already by participants, but creates a productive portrait of the meaningfulness of the practice to participants. In my experience, the interpretive account is successful if participants say something like: “That’s right, that’s how we do things, but I hadn’t thought of it quite like that before” (Carbaugh 1988a, p. xiv). Interpretive analysis is then both resonant with participants’ meanings, that is, it does not violate their sense of themselves; but it is also somewhat creative, for it puts their practice in a somewhat different semantic light.

Cultural radiants of meaning have been explicated in various prior works mentioned throughout this chapter. The ideas, then, are not declared here in the abstract, but derive from a body of descriptive and interpretive work.<sup>5</sup> For the sake of this discussion, I will briefly discuss each of the five radiants of meaning. Each suggests a question to ask about the meaning of a discursive practice to participants. Each hub implicates the others, even if all are not always highly salient.

1. Meanings about Being, Personhood, and Identity: Who am I or who are we? As people engage in communication practices, they say something about who each is. An analyst can ask of the practice: What does it presume, or create, as messages about identity? Messages about identity can be understood at a *cultural level concerning personhood*, that is, what beliefs are presumed in order to be a person here? Messages about identity can also be understood as *social identities*, that is, what positions—such as professor and student, husband and wife,

<sup>5</sup> The emphasis in this report is on the CuDA framework. The fieldwork literature cited throughout provides ample illustration of actual workings of this in the ethnographic literature. Specific pieces can be consulted for detailed demonstrations of these analyses.

mother and daughter—are established for people as they engage in communication in this way? Messages about identity can also be understood at a *personal level* as the unique qualities of participants come into focus (Carbaugh 1996). As the analyst interprets meanings at these levels, much may be learned about what is getting said in the discourse of concern. For example, in the descriptive data above, Kirsti is saying something at a deep cultural level about Finnish personhood, and about the social identity of being a friend, just as Mary is saying something about being “American” and its version of being a friend. In such moments, we say something to ourselves and others about who we are. Messages about identity can be explicitly coded into communication through identity terms, pronouns, address terms, or membership categorization devices (see Hester and Eglin 1997); these messages can also be powerfully coded implicitly. It is the cultural analyst’s task to know these messages and how they are active in communication practice.

2. Meanings about Relating, Relationships: How are we being related? As people engage in communication practices, they are being related to one another. In some, the relationship is presumed prior to the practice; in others, the practice is the activity in which relations are forged. An analyst can ask of a communication practice how it works to relate people, one to others, or others to one. Kristine Fitch (1998) has written about “interpersonal ideologies” as constructed in speech acts and events, including what these make culturally available to participants. The task of the analyst here, as Fitch emphasizes, is to explore how relationships are presumed and engaged in communication practices. Messages about relating can be explicitly coded into communication through relationship terms, personal idioms, and relative uses of address terms, but these messages can also be conveyed implicitly and powerfully. How this radiant of meaning-making is working is part of the cultural analyst’s interpretive task.
3. Meanings about Acting, Action, and Practice: What do people take themselves to be doing? What type of action is this that we are doing? As people engage in communication practices, they act as if they are doing one sort of thing, rather than other sorts of things. The type(s) of thing getting done can be interpreted by the cultural analyst in order to enrich one’s sense of the meaningfulness of that practice. Messages about action are often coded explicitly into communication through terms which identify the kinds of communication or activity that are relevant to participants. For example, participants might say they are “being honest” or “sharing feelings” or “reflecting thoughtfully” (Carbaugh 2005). They might also contest what they are and should be doing, as in whether they should “talk things through” or “put it in writing” (Baxter 1993). There is a special framework for analyzing such practices and the terms used to discuss them (see, e.g., Carbaugh 2005). In any event, as people communicate, so they also engage in a meta-commentary, implicitly or explicitly, about the kind of activity they are doing. The cultural analyst’s task is coming to know messages about these activities as they are explicitly and implicitly coded into communication.
4. Meanings about Feeling, Emotion, and Affect: Being socialized into life is to know what affect is appropriate, to what degree, on what occasions (Carbaugh

1990b, 2007; Scruton 1979). How do people feel about what is going on? As people engage in communication practices, they are involved in an affective performance. What is the feeling of this practice, what is its tone, or how is it keyed? As the analyst explores the feeling of the practice, whether painstaking or exhilarating, its affective dimension can become known. How feeling is structured and conveyed is thus crucial to understanding the meaning of discourses. Messages about feeling can be conveyed explicitly through emotion terms and vocabulary; yet feeling is also, often, conveyed more implicitly through nonverbal comportment. How affect is conveyed, and what it is saying through communication can be a site of important meanings for the cultural analyst.

5. Meanings about Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Where are these people located, and what is their sense of their places? How, if at all, are they identifying their landscape, relating to their environment, and establishing their place within it? As people engage in communication, they spin a cultural discourse that is located somewhere, and thus locates them there in a particular set of ways. How this is done conveys messages about place and dwelling. Messages about dwelling are tellingly and explicitly anchored in the use of place-names (Basso 1996), in locational formulations, and in direction giving. Cultural discourses have been studied which locate contested notions of “the same place,” as well as different versions of history attached to each (Carbaugh 1996; Carbaugh and Rudnick 2006). Cultural analysts benefit from knowing what communication practices are saying about where people are, how they are related to those places, and what should be done when inhabiting them.

Interpretations of discourse, of communication practice, can be formulated by attending to these potential radiants of meaning, and coming to know their immanence in practice. An analyst can ask about a practice: What does this say about identity, about relating, about acting, about feeling, and about dwelling? Some meanings may be more salient than others, some more amplified as others are muted. All are of interest as the analyst constructs an interpretive account of the cultural meanings in the discursive practice. The above hubs can help structure this analysis, as it helps us identify radiants of meanings in cultural discourses.

## 4.2 *Concepts for Formulating Interpretive Accounts*

What can one say about each hub or radiant of meaning, through what vocabulary? Several concepts have proven useful in the analysis of cultural discourses, especially in making claims about its meanings. A few of those are discussed here, as each helps establish not only what is culturally distinctive in communication practices, but what is culturally diverse as well.

An analyst can treat a word or phrase as a *symbol*, a *cultural* or *key term*. This draws attention to a word as a cultural concept that is dense with local meaning, used routinely, prominently, or is potent in its meaning. For example, in studies of Israeli popular communication, “dugri” is used to describe a kind of direct, frank

speech that has particularly dense meanings for the Sabra Jew (Katriel 2004). All cultural discourses contain terms that are deeply symbolic, and it is the cultural analyst's task to identify which, if any, are being used. The above radiants suggest examining discursive practices for such terms, deep cultural terms which say something about identity, relations, feeling, acting, or dwelling, respectively.

Cultural terms can be combined into a statement which captures participants' definitions, concepts, premises, beliefs, or values. These statements are called *cultural propositions*. For example, in studies of popular American communication, a speech event of a "talk show" can be summarized through the following beliefs, formulated here as cultural propositions: (1) The person is "an individual" who has "rights" and a "self;" (2) the "self" is "unique" and should strive to be expressively aware, independent, and open; and (3) the "self" struggles against "society" and its harmful, oppressive institutions (Carbaugh 1988a, 2005). Elsewhere, for example in some Japanese scenes, the basic proposition starts differently: The person is tied inextricably in "relationship with others," or, among some Hindi speakers, is "divisible into parts" (e.g., Saito 2007; Toyosaki 2003). Cultural propositions arrange key or cultural terms, the quoted terms here, into statements which are interpretations of local, taken-for-granted knowledge about personhood, relations, actions, feelings, and dwelling. Cultural propositions typically ground the analysis very close to the participants' views and thus help keep the interpretive account close to the cultural ground, so to speak.

*Cultural premises* are analysts' formulations about participants' beliefs about the significance and importance of what is going on, both as a condition for that practice of communication, and as expressed in that very practice (Carbaugh 2005, p. 5). Participants' beliefs can be about what exists (as in cultural proposition 1 in the preceding paragraph), or about what is proper or valued (as in proposition 2 above). While both propositions and premises can be formulated to capture beliefs or values, cultural premises are typically more abstract formulations, about specific terms and practices, with these being immanent across expressive practices. Cultural premises capture and explicate taken-for-granted knowledge which usually does not need to be stated by participants since it is believed to be part of the common sense. Formulating premises explicitly thus puts the taken for granted into a domain of "discursive scrutability," freeing it for analysts' and participants' reflections.

At times, interpretive analyses yield meanings which vary along specific dimensions as when identity terms reveal meanings of close-distant, equal-unequal, powerful-powerless. These dimensions have been called *semantic dimensions*, which identify continua of meanings with two sets of values. Note these are dimensions of "more or less," not dichotomies of an "either-or" quality. For example, Katriel and Philipsen (1981) identified two clusters of terms summarized as "communication" and "chitchat." These two clusters could be interpreted along three dimensions of meanings, close-distant, flexible-rigid, and supportive-neutral. The interpretive analysis then drew attention to cultural terms and dimensions of meanings with the former term, "communication," being rendered as a relatively valued practice, for it is close, supportive, and flexible, while the latter, "chitchat," was rendered as less valuable, for it is understood to be relatively distant, rigid, and neutral. In this way,

semantic dimensions identify two-valued sets that are used by participants to conceive of, and to evaluate their sense of personhood, relationships, actions, feeling, and dwelling (see Seitel 1974).

A final concept discussed here is the concept of *norm*. Communication norms are statements about conduct which are granted some degree of legitimacy by participants in a speech event or community (see Carbaugh 1990; Philipsen 1992). Norms are an analyst's formulation of a moral message that may be stated by participants themselves, but can also be implicit in the structuring of discourse. Given this practice, and the way people are doing it, the analyst asks: What is it presumably that should/not be done? Norms can be productively formulated about this through a four-part form: (1) In context C (specify the setting, scene, participants, topics of concern); (2) if one wants to do some task (e.g., be a particular kind of person, establish a kind of relationship, act a specific way, exhibit feeling in one way rather than others, dwell appropriately); (3) one ought/not (it is prescribed, preferred, permissible, or prohibited); and (4) to do X (a specific action). Formulating norms in this way helps capture participants' meanings about proper, value-laden action (Hastings 2000). So formulated, communication norms can also, through the framework being discussed generally here, establish particular, common ingredients of norms, and thus help us identify how they vary cross-cultural study.

This set of concepts provides a vocabulary for conducting interpretive analyses of cultural discourses. In the process, certain radiants of meaning may be explicated as symbolic terms, cultural propositions, cultural premises, semantic dimensions, and/or norms. Each says something about the meaningfulness of a practice to participants; each can also complement the others in constructing an interpretive account of the discursive practice. All of course are not necessary in any one account. Interpretive analysis is something of a science, in that it can be structured in a systematic and rigorous way; yet it is also something of an art. One must have a feel for what is most productive for attention, given the particulars of the case, at this particular moment in time, for purposes of discussion with some audience.

## 5 Producing and Assessing Cultural Discourse Analyses

The above framework provides a way of designing cultural pragmatic research of discourses (Berry 2009; Scollo 2011). It suggests a wide range of questions, proposes five modes of inquiry for responding to those questions, provides a specific interpretive stance for discourse analysis, and does so with a special set of concepts. When designing a study, then, the analyst can adopt or create a specific theoretical, descriptive, and interpretive approach to it that serves its specific purposes.

CuDA studies, therefore, exhibit commitments to the following: theorizing communication generally, explicitly, and as a basis for further investigations; describing in detail the communication practices being explored; and interpreting the meaningfulness of those practices to participants. In the special case of intercultural encounters, the studies assume a kind of double burden, as what needs described, and



interpreted, from the vantage of each discourse, can have its own unique cultural features (Berry 2009). Attending to these, and their interaction, places special demands on such study and thus makes an explicit framework for their analysis indispensable (Scollo 2011). Hopefully, the framework discussed here provides one such way for at least some of our future studies.

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# Transcription as Second-Order Entextualization: The Challenge of Heteroglossia

Hartmut Haberland and Janus Mortensen

*The unread story is not a story; it is little black marks on wood pulp. The reader, reading it, makes it live...*  
Ursula K. Le Guin

**Abstract** This chapter argues that transcription should be conceived of as a special case of entextualization, viz., the reification or fixation of verbal interaction, making it transportable in space and time. The chapter discusses issues of readability and naturalness of representation, especially with regard to the representation of multilingual interaction and the use of non-Latin scripts in transcription.

**Keywords** Societal pragmatics · Entextualization · Naturalness of representation · Transcription

## 1 Writing and Speaking, Listening and Reading

Common sense—in the sense of Gramsci’s *senso comune* or *Alltagsverständnis*—has it that “of course” the spoken word came first. This was the case in the developmental history of the human species (phylogenesis) and is the case in the development of the individual human being (ontogenesis), where listening and speaking come earlier than reading and writing. The common sense conclusion that follows from this is often on the one hand that writing has somehow historically developed as a representation of speech—which does not necessarily have to have been the case, as Schmandt-Besserat (1977) has pointed out (since writing may have developed as a means of bookkeeping, only later applied to the representation of speech). On the other hand, writing is often seen as derived from, hence secondary to speech, most pointedly expressed by Leonard Bloomfield: “Writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks” (Bloomfield 1933, p. 21). Similar points have been made by Otto Jespersen (1924) and Henry A. Gleason (1955) among others, see also Linell (2005).

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Detractors of the written word, such as Bright, almost gleefully quote “the warning of Socrates” (Bright 1984, p. 152) against the dangers of writing, as expressed in the myth on the invention of letters by Theuth told in Plato’s *Phaidros* (St. III 274c–275b). Theuth had presented to King Thamus his many inventions, among them letters.

The story goes that Thamus said many things to Theuth in praise or blame of the various arts, which it would take too long to repeat; but when they came to the letters, “This invention, O king”, said Theuth, “will make the Egyptians wiser and will improve their memories; for it is an elixir of memory and wisdom that I have discovered”. But Thamus replied, “Most ingenious Theuth, one man has the ability to beget arts, but the ability to judge of their usefulness or harmfulness to their users belongs to another; [275a] and now you, who are the father of letters, have been led by your affection to ascribe to them a power the opposite of that which they really possess. For this invention will produce forgetfulness in the minds of those who learn to use it, because they will not practice their memory. Their trust in writing, produced by external characters which are no part of themselves, will discourage the use of their own memory within them. You have invented an elixir not of memory, but of reminding; and you offer your pupils the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom, for they will read many things without instruction and will therefore seem [275b] to know many things, when they are for the most part ignorant and hard to get along with, since they are not wise, but only appear wise” (Plato 1925).

It has been noted, though, that what Socrates really warns against here is the illusion that rote learning (e.g. of speeches of famous orators), which presupposes a form of rendering of the speech in writing, can lead to true understanding (Trabtatoni 2012). Whatever the virtues of script, it was for as long time considered as something that could not exist on its own, without speech, and had to be brought to life by being read aloud. As Bright also points out, St. Augustine still marvelled at his teacher’s, St. Ambrose’s, art of silent reading (hardly heard of around the year 384 AD), “without uttering a word, or even moving his tongue” (Bright 1984, p. 153).

But there is also *buon senso* in treating writing as something other and more than mere imperfect rendering of speech, as many others have pointed out (Uldall 1944; Suzuki 1977). We do not want to take on this complex issue in its entirety but concentrate on the special case where transformation of speech into writing actually *does* take place—the case of transcription of verbal exchanges in interaction and linguistic research. In these cases, there is a clear case of speech existing prior to a written record (something which does not always have to be the case in other contexts) and we are interested in the process that leads to production of this record, and the transformations that the volatile living word undergoes on the way to its fossilization in a durable and transportable form.

## 2 Transcripts as Texts

Transcription of linguistic production has for a long time been a common research activity of anthropologists, ethnographers, field linguists, conversation analysts and others. As Bucholtz (2009) points out, transcripts used for research purposes are texts much in the same way as parliament records, police interrogation records and

transcripts from wiretapping: they are representations of a previous oral interaction, as opposed to newspaper articles, novels and biographies, which may rely on, and embed, other texts but do not represent specific speech events in their entirety.

It follows from this that we can see transcription as a special case of creating a text from an utterance. The term “text” has, of course, been used in many different ways by researchers. For some, it just represents any larger body of verbal production that is structured, i.e. characterized by cohesion and coherence (de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981). Jacob Mey dismisses this concept as “not a particularly helpful or interesting concept in understanding human speech behavior” (Mey 1983, p. 184) and suggests looking at discourses instead, where utterances are contextualized within “the fabric of society” (Mey 2001, p. 190). In this chapter, we follow a different tradition that—maybe not in an unbroken line—can be traced back to Bronislaw Malinowski, and has been repropounded by Ehlich (1979; 2007a, b)—both later papers reprints of papers from 1983) and after that by Bauman and Briggs (1990) and again by Park and Buchholz (2009).

In this tradition, an *utterance* is part of interaction. It happens and then it is gone. It is volatile. A *text*, on the other hand, is divorced (separated) from its context of action and situation (Malinowski 1935, p. 8) and, hence, transportable. It can survive the moment. Similarly, Ehlich talks about a text, when the utterance is preserved by some means after the immediate speech situation (Ehlich 1979, p. 426). An *utterance* happens once and cannot be repeated. A *text* can be reproduced, remembered (stored) and transported in space and time. One could consider a text as a *trace* of an interaction. But interactions do not leave traces by themselves except in the memory of those who took part in them or witnessed them, and not all texts are necessarily traces of interaction.

### 3 Transcription as Entextualization

The action of creating a textual trace on the basis of a volatile utterance can be called *entextualization*, a term which is possibly a calque of the German term *Vertextung*. In the definition of Bauman and Briggs, entextualization is “the process of rendering discourse extractable, of making a stretch of linguistic production into a unit—a text—that can be lifted out of its interactional setting” (Bauman and Briggs 1990, p. 73). In a related definition from Park and Bucholtz, it is described as “the process by which circulable texts are produced by extracting discourse from its original context and reifying it as a bounded object” (Park and Bucholtz 2009, p. 485).

In conversation analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, pragmatics and similar disciplines concerned with the analysis of naturally occurring talk, researchers tend to base their work on two successive processes of entextualization, both of which are of critical importance to the analyses produced. The first process, which we propose to call *first-order entextualization*, concerns the audio(-visual) recording of a stretch of linguistic production, or more comprehensively: the recording of a stretch of human activity, including verbal and non-verbal activities. The second process,

which is commonly referred to as “transcription” or “representation” (Karrebæk 2012), and which we conceptualize as a *second-order entextualization*, concerns the transfer of a recorded stretch of human activity to some form of written representation.

Before the use of audio-visual recording equipment became widespread, transcripts were commonly used as first-order entextualizations. This is the process Malinowski (1935, p. xix) has in mind when he describes the challenges involved in describing languages that only exist in the volatile mode of speaking:

In dealing with language at the pre-literate stage, the ethnographer is faced by another difficulty. The speech of his people does not live on paper. It exists only in free utterance between man and man. *Verba volant, scripta manent*. The ethnographer has to immobilise the volatile substance of his subject-matter and put it on paper. Whereas the language of literature in more highly developed communities is handed down to us on marble, brass, parchment or pulp, that of a savage tribe is never framed to be taken outside its context of situation.

With the seemingly ubiquitous presence of audio-visual recording devices and the ensuing abundance of audio-visual data that we experience today, one might think that transcription was becoming unfashionable as a mode of entextualization: even though an audio-visual recording is by necessity a partial representation, it will almost invariably still be a fuller representation of an event than one produced by pen and paper (or word processing software) of the same event, either in real time or post hoc on the basis of a recording.

But in most cases, researchers need (or at least traditionally believe they need) a second-order, two-dimensional entextualization on paper to do their job as analysts. Video recordings are texts because they are transportable and can be played repeatedly. But they cannot be viewed as a Gestalt. So, in order to maintain the overview of the recorded event, the researcher transcribes the event. This has the inherent danger of losing the clear notion of the transcript not being “the data”, something that the use of linking software which gives simultaneous access to first- and second-order entextualization could be a remedy for, a point which will not be pursued further here (see Haberland and Mortensen 2011; Hazel et al. 2012).

What will be pursued in the following are some of the specific pitfalls involved in the process of entextualizing utterances through transcription. We begin with some general observations concerning the challenges of producing transcripts, and then move on to a discussion of some of the particular problems that may arise when complex heteroglossic discourse has to be rendered through the mainstreaming medium of orthography.

## 4 Reading Transcripts as Retextualization

In discussing entextualizations or *Vertextungen*, we should not lose sight of what happens to the text after it has been produced and thus been made transportable in space and time. In short: What do we do with the transcript once we find it in a different place (and—maybe trivially—at a different time) from where and when

the utterance was originally produced? Some problems that arise in this connection apparently have to do with the fact that considerations of *how* to transcribe are tied up with questions of what we do with the transcript later on. Entextualization is always done with a view to *retextualization*, which is the process by which the text (in our case the transcript) is brought to life again by being read, either aloud or silently.<sup>1</sup>

Given that an entextualization is always reduced (hence “partial” in both senses of the word), or “shaven” (Larsen 1975, p. 66), the question is how much reduction we can allow before a relevant retextualization is made impossible. This issue has often been discussed as “granularity”: How fine-grained does a transcript have to be to serve its purpose?

Deppermann and Schütte (2008, p. 207) have argued that it is never enough for a transcript just to state that a phenomenon is present in the interaction; it has to go at least one step further to provide detail that makes it arguable that the phenomenon actually is present in the interaction. To take their example: In order to show that a conversation contains cases of irony, one cannot just bracket passages in it with the label *ironic*, one has to represent pitch movement if the observation of pitch movement makes us realize that an interlocutor employs language mockingly.

If we—for the sake of experiment—remove a level of granularity, it may no longer be possible to describe “what is going on” in the interaction. The following is an excerpt of a transcript taken from Speer (2005, p. 112):

- 1 Sue: Was he attractive?  
 2 (0.6)  
 3 Ben: Phh. (1.8) I s'pose he was reasonably well looking. ↑Yeah.  
 4 (1.6)  
 5 But you know it doesn't interest me,  
 6 (.)  
 7 I'm definitely (0.8) not interest(h)ed(h) in(h) men(h).  
 8 Sue: hhh.

Sue interviews Ben about his visit to a gay bar. If we claimed we were only interested in the content of the interview, Ben's narrative, and not the way it is being presented by him, we could remove the indications of inbreath and pauses which would yield the following alternative transcript:<sup>2</sup>

- 1 Sue: Was he attractive?  
 2 Ben: Phh. I s'pose he was reasonably well looking. Yeah.  
 3 But you know it doesn't interest me, I'm definitely not interested in men.  
 4 Sue: hhh.

<sup>1</sup> As we understand Bauman and Briggs (1990), who have been the most important promoters of the term “entextualization”, our term “retextualization” is not quite the same as, or only part of, their process of recontextualization. Baumann and Briggs are not interested in interaction research and transcription practices, but more broadly in the aesthetic uses of language and an ethnography of performance.

<sup>2</sup> The idea for this thought experiment we owe to Spencer Hazel. The same excerpt is also used by Kasper (2013) for a similar argument.



This alternative transcript could be described as less fine-grained, but it is clear that noting inbreaths and pauses (which can indicate embarrassment) is not just a luxury of the transcriber. Something essential from the original interaction becomes unrecoverable if features like these of the first-order entextualization are no longer represented in the transcript. We explain this by pointing out that losing a degree of granularity makes proper retextualization difficult or sometimes even impossible. Lack of granularity is irreversible in retextualization. Transcribers may have a tendency to unburden transcripts from markers that are considered of less importance (Deppermann and Schütte 2008, p. 206), and although this often makes sense in relation to the ensuing analysis, one has to remember that omissions will, in many cases, make retextualization difficult or underdetermined.

## 5 Naturalized and Denaturalized Transcriptions

Celia Roberts has pointed out that transcribers have “to produce transcriptions that are accurate and readable but that are also reflexive in how they make explicit to the reader the constructed nature of written talk and so the problematic nature of accuracy and readability” (Roberts 1997, p. 168). This requires an awareness that both transcriber and reader of the transcript (which is often the same person in the analysis phase of a research project) are dealing with entextualizations and not with the event itself, of which the entextualization only is a partial second-order representation. The use of standard orthography to some extent counteracts this awareness, because readers are invited to perceive the text as a written text, not as a representation of spoken text.

But there is a strong argument for the use of standard orthographies, viz. the requirement of readability. Bucholtz (2000) has argued that transcriptions should follow generally known coding rules, i.e. standard orthographies, which language users consider “natural” since they know them from their day-to-day practice. In her opinion, it is generally not feasible or advisable to “denaturalize” the transcription by introducing either systematic or ad-hoc strategies for the sake of accuracy. This warning can be phrased in terms of entextualization and retextualization: If the entextualization is impressionistic and makes use of ad-hoc devices, retextualization is difficult and underdetermined.

Nobody makes exclusive use of phonetic notation (IPA) for transcription, if only because one has to be a trained phonetician to both produce and decode it. In some early forms of conversation analysis, a technique called “eye dialect” was quite fashionable, but this has been heavily criticized. Dennis Preston cites “Wih A one Boat uh:::uhlondohlenko”, probably supposed to mean something like “with, uh, one boat, you hold on, don’t let go”, as a striking example of what he calls the “antiphonic horrors” of eye dialect (Preston 1985, p. 329). The problem with this form of entextualization is that the researcher-transcriber has essentially created a private language which probably only (s)he can use in order to reproduce the original sound (s)he remembers from listening to the first-order entextualization

caught on tape; everybody else can only share this by listening to her or his retextualization. Some members of the trade are famous—and rightly so—for their stunning retextualization performances at conferences, but the problem is that sharing of the data in this case is dependent on the researcher’s own performance. When read on paper, this is a case of what Bucholtz calls a denaturalized transcription: “denaturalized transcription, in its faithfulness to oral language, may make speech itself seem alien” (Bucholtz 2000, p. 1461). An added problem with eye-dialect (which has been pointed out by several commentators) is that the use of non-standard orthographical representations can have a stereotyping function, like Preston’s (1985) “Li’l Abner syndrome” (the social stereotyping and stigmatization of accents and thereby of social groups).

So, there is very good sense in using standard orthography, a “naturalized” transcription that makes it easier for the reader to recognize what is meant by the interactants—as long as all those things that are lost in standard orthography like pitch, pauses, overlaps, etc. are supplied by special conventional marks. Conversation Analysis papers often have an appendix spelling out those conventions, although the development of standards even for that has made this less urgent. This approach works fine a long way; yet, as we will discuss below there are particular problems related to what we call heteroglossic data.

## 6 The Representation of Linguistic Otherness

The representation of linguistic otherness has a long tradition in literary works, at least going back to the Homeric hymn to Aphrodite (Haberland 2007). Dubois and Horvath (2002) quote a passage from a more recent novel, *The Next Step in the Dance* by Tim Gautreaux (1998),

*Hey, Grand-père.*

The old man turned from the stove and arched an eyebrow.

“Ey, T-Bub.” He shook his silver head. “Ey, T-Bub.”

The reader is supposed to be somewhat familiar with American Southern speech, and even have to have some rudimentary French, in order to make out what this text says about the two persons in the scene: “*Hey* suggests someone from the American South, and use of the terms of address *Grand-père* and *T-Bub* suggests someone from a Cajun background. Moreover, the difference between *Hey* by the grandson and *Ey* by the grandfather suggests generational differences in dialect” (Dubois and Horvath 2002, p. 264).

In these literary renderings of otherness, we are not talking about entextualizations since there has not been any previous real interaction turned into a text; the author has just created a text from scratch, so to say. But in dealing with dialect and accent data, where no standard orthography is available, linguists have done the same in the case of actual second-order entextualizations. Here is an example from Wodak (1981, p. 157, our paraphrase in italics):

M: Manche Leit fahren ein, und manche Leit fahren net ein.

...

F: Na, i m $\ddot{a}$ n, weil—nicht da $\beta$  man das sagt, aber—da t $\ddot{a}$ t i mir so viel beiseitelegen,  
i mein, da m $\ddot{u}$ bert noch was au $\beta$ eschauen!

M: *Some people don't get anywhere, but some people do.*

...

F: *No, I mean, because—not that you say that, but—I would put so much aside,  
I mean, there must come something out of it!*

The transcript renders features of Viennese German in a way that people familiar with this accent<sup>3</sup> can make sense of: unrounding of vowels and [ə] apocope (*Leit* for *Leute*), monophthongization (*m $\ddot{a}$ n* rather than *meine*) and lexical items like *i* (for *ich*) and *net* (for *nicht*). People not familiar with it would not know whether *net* is [net], [n $\ddot{e}$ t] or [n $\ddot{e}$ t]. But there is also a strong example of denaturalization: [ma:n] is rendered as *m $\ddot{a}$ n* rather than *maan* or *mahn*, while another form of denaturalization often found in literature is avoided, viz. the use of the apostrophe to mark apocope: *i mein*, not *i mein'* ‘I mean’.

On the other hand, the transcript indicates that F uses both Vienna German forms (*m $\ddot{a}$ n*) and forms closer to the standard (*mein*), although this might be a case of ‘vicarious notation’, i.e. variation may also occur in other places, where no similarly obvious notation offers itself.

Wodak even offers a comment on her ‘‘quasi-orthographical’ transliteration’’ (Wodak 1981, p. 108) and gives a glossary (Wodak 1981, pp. 108–109), with the following entries among others:

*m $\ddot{a}$ n* [ma:n]=‘‘*ich mein*’’  
*g $\ddot{s}$ agt* [ks $\ddot{o}$ kt, ksakt]=‘‘*gesagt*’’

—where the latter entry both indicates that the transcription allows for variation ([ $\ddot{o}$ ]/[a])—hence, carries a certain indeterminacy—and follows a morphological–lexical principle, since the perfective prefix *ge-* ([g $\ddot{o}$ ] in the Standard) is represented by *g* rather than *k* to preserve orthographical unity of the morpheme across contexts. Adherence to morphological–lexical principles is otherwise clearly a feature of naturalizing transcriptions.

This example from Wodak shows both the potential and pitfalls of eye-dialect techniques. The main drawback is that eye-dialect techniques work in literary works, where their indeterminacy does not really matter as long as the reader gets the idea, but not as well in transcripts, where accuracy is required in order to allow for precise retextualization.

<sup>3</sup> The common terms *dialect* and *accent* in English (as used even outside of interaction and language studies) are not quite identical to Continental concepts of German *Dialekt* and *Akzent* or Danish *dialekt* and *accent*, where *Akzent/accent* typically apply to foreign *accents*, not the pronunciation of ‘native’ lects. Wodak terms the variety that occurs in her data: Viennese vernacular, ‘‘Wiener Umgangssprache’’.

## 7 The Challenge of Heteroglossia

When people interact, they tend to draw on a range of different linguistic repertoires. These repertoires may in some cases, particularly in multilingual interaction, be related to different languages; in other cases, they may concern different ways of speaking the same language, for instance through the use of different accents. Speech events where this form of multi-voicedness or *heteroglossia* as we propose to call it here, using a pertinent but slippery term from Bakhtin (cf. discussion in Androutsopoulos 2011, pp. 282–283), plays a central role for the interaction, constitute a particular challenge for the process of transcription.

When transcripts are produced by means of standard orthography (as we recommended they be just above) the process of entextualization almost inevitably has a univocalising effect on the voices being transcribed. Even if one accepts Makoni and Pennycook’s critique of the widespread practice of conceiving of languages as “separate and enumerable objects” (Makoni and Pennycook 2005, p. 138), the fact remains that orthographies are typically indeed just that. Standard orthographies are not designed to encode more than one language at a time (though there are exceptions as we will return to below), nor can they typically be used to reflect differences in pronunciation. So, what do we do if a transcript is supposed to reflect differences exactly like these?

Since researchers are no longer dependent on transcripts for data sharing, one could avoid the problem presented by heteroglossic data simply by sharing video or audio recordings (the first-order entextualizations) rather than cleanly shaven but insufficient transcripts. Yet, as argued above, researchers tend to require transcripts for their analytical work, so we are forced to look closer at some of the possible solutions to the challenge of transcribing heteroglossic data.

The reality of multilingual interaction often shows that what on the surface looks as if it could be neatly segmented into different “codes” between which the interactants “switch” is a rather more messy affair. This has led many researchers to prefer the term “language alternation” which does not imply the neatness as code-switching. Gafaranga and Torras (2002) have suggested that only if language alternation is noticed and is oriented to by the participants, we can talk about code switching. If not, one should rather talk about a “bilingual medium”, where elements from several languages can be used freely. This understanding of the nature of bilingual talk is undermined by transcription practices like the following, taken from the LIPPS project (LIPPS 2000), where every single word is tagged either as @1 (English) or @2 (Spanish):

- \*YVO: excuse@1 me@1 could@1 we@1 have@1 two@1 coffees@1 and@1 some@1 scones@1 please@1?  
 \*NAT: Yvonne@1 para@2 mi@2 no@2 voyas@2 a@2 pedir@2 scones@1 de@2 esos@2 que@2 ahora@2 me@2 estoy@2 tratando@2 de@2 controlar@2 un@2 poquito@2 antes@2 de@2 Pascua@2.

This transcript implies that there is a clear segregation between languages, though we cannot be sure that this is how the participants themselves see this. In principle, the transcript could easily be reduced:

- 1 Yvo: excuse me could we have two coffees and some scones please?  
 2 Nat: Yvonne para mí no vayas a pedir scones de esos que ahora me estoy tratando de controlar un poquito antes de Pascua.

This version avoids making *obvious* claims about whether we are dealing with an example of code switching or bilingual medium. Still, because it introduces elements from different orthographies, it cannot escape making *implicit* claims about this. In naturalized representations, languages are separated by clearly different coding practices, viz. orthographies. “mí” can only be Spanish and “could we have” could only be English. So, the problem that remains in our modified transcript is that the principle of naturalized transcription clashes with the resistance against treating languages as fully separable.

Unsatisfactory as our modified transcript may appear to those who want to do quantitative analyses of transcripts by computer (how do you search for Spanish or English words if they are not tagged as such?), we would want to argue that the ambiguity the transcript represents is an asset rather than a problem, simply because it highlights the reality of multilingual interaction. The word “weekend” is an English word, but also a common loan in Danish. But when used in a Danish context, it can be realized either with an initial [v] or like in English with an initial [w], the latter sound not being part of the core Danish phonetic repertoire, but often heard in exactly this type of word. The question whether we are dealing with a loan or language alternation is probably rather futile in a case like this. So, the transcription should not try to answer a question which probably should not be asked in the first place.<sup>4</sup>

In encounters between speakers of Scandinavian languages (Swedish, Norwegian and Danish), a form of “polyglot dialog” (Posner 1991) is common which could look like this where speakers clearly keep their languages apart (data from Barfod 2014):

- |         |   |  |
|---------|---|--|
| Betina: | så derfor er der så mange: turi <sup>7</sup> ster<br>(0.9)                                | so that’s why there are so many tourists   |
| Jan:    | i stockholm så hade dom (2.0)<br>tror det var juni (0.4)<br>så låg det fem såna här stora | in Stockholm so they had<br>think it was June<br>then there were five of these giant |

In this segment, Betina speaks Danish and Jan speaks Swedish, so there is no need to use anything else but the generally accepted naturalized spellings for either language. But in the following excerpt, we see that speakers do not always observe clear distinctions between the two languages:

- |         |  |   |
|---------|--|---|
| Betina: | hvad hedder de skibe der kommer ind i:<br>(0.9)<br>københavn de øhm<br>(1.7)<br>luksuslinere hedder de det | what’s the name of those ships<br>that come in to<br>Copenhagen those<br>luxury liners are they called that |
|---------|--|---|

<sup>4</sup> Note that the use of eye dialect is no solution; the example quoted by Preston, see above, is firmly anchored within American English spelling conventions; the same technique could only be used for multilingual interaction if one decided that everything has to be noted by the conventions of one of the languages involved.

In this case, Betina uses a hybrid form—which is her way of accommodating to a Swedish speaker in the conversation. Her “köbenhavn” is neither Danish (København [k<sup>h</sup>øβm̥'haʊ̯'n]) nor Swedish (Köpenhamn [eø:p<sup>h</sup>en'hamn]), but something in between, a local hybrid form that cannot be accounted for fully by means of standard orthographies. As long as this only concerns single words or parts of words, using IPA to mark exactly those words or segments might be a manageable technique.

## 8 Accent Stylization

The challenge of heteroglossia does not only involve the entextualization of multilingual interaction; the multi-voicedness that multilingual data so clearly exemplify is also found in monolingual interaction in the form of accent stylization. In Coupland's specific application of Bakhtin's wider notion of stylization, utterances can be described as stylized “when speakers are being studiedly ‘artificial’ or ‘putting on a voice’” (Coupland 2001, p. 346). This is a very powerful resource in discourse, but one that is not easily entextualized. Consider the following example taken from the CALPIU storehouse:

- 57 INF: and er many of student er go to  
 58 (0.3) mn England  
 59 (1.1)  
 60 *Interviewer nods*  
 → 61 INF: Canada (0.2) and [Aus] tralia also America≡  
 62 INT: [m]  
 63 INF: ≡[be] cause these countries is speak English≈  
 64 [mm]  
 65 INT: ≈yeah  
 66 (0.4)  
 67 INF: erhm (0.3) mn (.) for me (0.4) I'm trying to go to (.) England (.)  
 68 and Canada (0.4) but I didn't got er my visa (0.3)  
 69 and also (0.3) one of my (0.3) erm (0.7) father's friends (0.3)  
 70 she said it's better to go to Denmark (0.2)  
 71 INT: okay ≈  
 72 INF: ≈ and so (0.2) and also it's good for girls because in other countries  
 73 not very safety (0.3)  
 → 74 for example (0.2) America

Adopting a notational practice employed in Coupland (2007) we could refine a part of this transcript like this:

- 59 (1.1)  
 60 *Interviewer nods*  
 → 61 INF: Canada (0.2) and [Aus] tralia also America ≡  
 62 INT: [m]  
 → 63 INF: ≡because these countries is speak English

The student talks about different countries to choose between as host countries for exchange students, and she lends her reference to the USA, a special expressive force by using an American retroflex [ɹ] in exactly the word “America” (and not otherwise).<sup>5</sup> A normal, naturalized transcription would miss this point as a basis for the analysis. Since there is no uptake by the interviewer, some analysts might consider it irrelevant, but including it in the notation leaves it up to the reader to decide this—or even to discover an uptake that the original analyst had missed.

Similarly, in Fabricius and Mortensen (2013, p. 391), where an interviewee with a Southern English background talks about people from Northern England being proud of their “accent”:

19 F07: they they won't let me say Newcastle ([[a:]])  
it has to be Newcastle ([[a]])

In Coupland's (2007) notation, this could have been rendered as

a:  
19 F07: they they won't let me say Newcastle  
a  
it has to be Newcastle

without any loss of information.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, multiple types of heteroglossia can be displayed in a single utterance. This is illustrated in the following example, adapted from Mortensen and Fabricius (2014, p. 206), which shows language alternation and accent stylization at the same time. The example is taken from an interview with a Danish student at a Danish university enrolled in an “international” program, where English is the medium of instruction. The student had expressed fear that the lecturers' English would be poor, but it turned out that this was not the case at all—not like with politicians who were criticized in the Danish press for their bad English. In connection with this, she switches at one point from Danish into English:

64 INF2:	jeg havde været en lille smule	<i>I had been a little</i>
65	bekymret for at	<i>worried that</i>
65	at det blev sådan noget	<i>that it would be sort of</i>
→ 66	<i>and then øh (0.4) then we</i>	
→ 67	<i>have to øhm (0.2)</i>	
68	ja sådan noget	<i>yeah something like that</i>

The challenge for the transcription and presentation would appear minimal here, at least at first glance. In the format we have adopted here, the part of the utterance that is in English is marked quite arbitrarily in italics, and a translation of the Danish part into the language of this chapter is provided in a separate column. But there is

<sup>5</sup> Although this is not clear from the excerpt, this applies also to other post-vocalic occurrences of /t/.

<sup>6</sup> It has to be noted though that in either notation there is a lot of being taken for granted since only what the transcriber (and later analyzer) considers a “rich point” (Agar 1994) is granted an annotation. Everything else is taken to be “business as usual”, but for readers not familiar to the same degree with the languages or varieties, there may still be doubts about the exact phonetic shape of the utterance.

something more going on, which is difficult to capture in the transcript: When the student switches into English in lines 66 and 67, she puts on a mock Danish accent which is essential to the point she is making. This cannot be read immediately from the transcript, and must therefore be communicated through different means for readers who do not have access to the first-order entextualization.

Another heteroglossic situation where multiple languages are involved is the following excerpt from Markaki et al. (2010, p. 1528) where the missing uptake of a name (of a Dutch person as we would guess from the second name) is followed by repetition first with “English pronunciation” and then “French pronunciation” (according to the authors’ annotation):

4 CLA: <r:ob[ɹ:ert? ((english pronunciation))>  
5 BET: [ <robert ((french pronunciation))>

A lot of the interpretation work is left to the reader who has to know that the letter <r> is a representation of either [ɹ] or [r] in different varieties of English<sup>7</sup> and of [ʀ] in French. But one could—and conversation analysts probably will—argue that what matters is not a realistic phonetic rendering of the interaction, but an annotation of potentially relevant aspects of it, viz. those that the participants orient to. The question is how the reader is to decide which such features are relevant if the transcriber already has censored those features that the analyst later will consider as not being oriented to.

This becomes clear in another example from the same article, where what the authors call a “hyperbolic” pronunciation of the [x]-sound in the German (or Austrian or Swiss) name of “Weizenmacher” causes a lot of merriment. Again, what is really interesting for the analysis is the sequential embedding. On one occasion, mentioning the name with this pronunciation triggers a whole battery of laughter from several (but apparently not all) participants:

1 CLA: weizen [ ma <CH::er. = ((hyperbolic pronunciation))>  
2 MAR: [ °xx, xx°  
3 MAR:=[ch:..... ]  
4 SIL: [Hm, [heu. he  
5 ROM: [hö he, [he,] h[E,]  
6 XXX: [hö.] h[E,]  
7 MAR: [tsh] &  
8 MAR: &H [ :E HI, [HI, HI, hI, hI, (hi.)  
(Markaki et al. 2010, p. 1528)

In the description of the speech event, only occasional attempts at a phonetic representation are made; ad-hoc descriptive devices prevail like “the name is pronounced by foregrounding in a hyperbolic way the guttural sound ‘CH’” (Markaki et al. 2010, p. 1528)—although one could discuss if “foregrounding” is a descriptive rather than interpretative term.

<sup>7</sup> We are not told if “English” is a glossonym or a toponym here, i.e. “in English” or in “in England”.



In another part of the interview quoted above from Fabricius and Mortensen (2013), the interviewee makes fun of Northern English speakers making fun of the way Southern English speakers sound “posh”. This is a delicate task: She has to do being somebody else doing being sounding like they think *she* herself sounds (but she has to sound different from her normal way of speaking because otherwise the point would be lost).<sup>8</sup>

39 F07: Northerners I’ve heard saying that Southerners are  
40 posh and ooh I had to speak all posh and Southern today and

Now, if one relied exclusively on the second-order entextualization of the transcript, something would have been lost. Adding granularity, on the other hand, (the extra layer that Deppermann and Schütte (2008) talk about) would only happen since the transcriber anticipates a “rich point” that the analyst later would take notice of. In this case, the authors supply the missing information not as part of the transcript but as a comment:

The word “posh” is used twice in line 40 and in both cases it is pronounced with a LOT vowel whose production involves a certain “plumminess”, which is a voice quality achieved by “lowering the larynx and widening the oropharynx” (Wells 1982, p. 283). Wells describes this sort of “plumminess” as one of the features he resorts to when producing upper-crust RP “for purposes of acting, demonstration or caricature” (Wells 1982, p. 283). We will argue that something similar is happening in line 40 where the interviewee, through the plummy LOT vowel, is arguably producing stylized RP. (Fabricius and Mortensen 2013, p. 390)

The burden of this analysis should not be put on the shoulders of a transcriber. In cases like this, the transcript has to be accompanied by a first-order entextualization (in the form of an audio or video recording) when the analysis is being conducted. The general lesson here is that the transcript, necessary as it may be for some parts of the analysis, should never be trusted to tell the full story.

## 9 Other Scripts than Latin Scripts

Facing the task of rendering a heteroglossic discourse, it might at first sight look as if it were an advantage having the affordance of two separate scripts for the two languages in question. A rather clear-cut example is the following excerpt from an interview with a Chinese student in an English language university program in Denmark, who comments on her teachers’ occasional slipping into Danish. She brands this—convenient as it may be for her Danish co-students—as simply not “international” enough, using the English word:

<sup>8</sup> In a data session of the Lingcorp project at Roskilde University, the question came up if a particular speaker tried to sound like a Danish speaker trying to sound like a German. Again, this tentative interpretation offer was made on the basis not of a transcript but of listening to a first-order entextualization. The other participants in the data acknowledged this as a joke, but there was no way of telling on the basis of the video recording whether this was a joke about German or Danish speakers. We doubt that a more fine-grained, but purely descriptive transcript could have solved the issue.

- Student: 当然这也是方便下面的丹麦丹麦的同学，  
但是我就会觉得好像有点哈不够 international 那种  
Of course it [teachers' switch into Danish] is also convenient for the Danish  
students but then I can feel as if it is not *international* enough.<sup>9</sup>

Using different scripts for words in different languages resembles the practice of printing foreign names and Latin quotes in Antiqua in texts otherwise composed in blackletter (see the example from Jan Huygen van Linschoten's *Voyage ofte Schipvaert [sc. to India]* of 1596, where *Goa* and *Te Deum Laudamus, &c.* are in Antiqua).



This neat use of two scripts for two languages presupposes that there are no problems in telling what belongs to which language, which is not always easy. In Tsitsipis' (1991; 2004) studies of discourse in Greek and Arvanite (a local variety of Albanian formerly widely spoken in parts of Greece), different techniques are used to distinguish Greek and Albanian elements; one of them employed in Tsitsipis (1991) is to use Greek script for Greek elements and Latin script (with Albanian orthography) for Albanian elements. An example is the following excerpt:

- Terminal speaker: η άλλη ήταν ετοιμοθάνατη και μόλις πήγαν να τη δούνε “aah! puth më ne góljē!” mendë färe pljåka, είχε εξάνηεις, πώς το λένε στα Αρβανίτικα, στην καθαρεύουσα;  
*The other [woman] was close to die and as soon as they went to visit her “aah! kiss my mouth”; the old woman [had] no mind, she had an erotic excitement, how do you call it in Arvanitika, in the [standard form] katharévusa?*
- A middle-aged woman: kéi floγ, kéi anevázmë.  
*She had [erotic] heat, she had warmth.*

The younger, “terminal” speaker of Arvanite (who does not have full command of this endangered or dying language any more, but can use certain set expressions in discourse) tells a joke but enlists help from an older speaker of Arvanite (who has retained more of the language) to get the punch line across.

The important point for the analysis is that the answer to the inquiry “how do you call it in Arvanitika, in the standard form?” offered by the fluent Arvanite speaker uses two Greek loanwords which are considered as Arvanite lexemes (hence written in Latin letters, *floy* and *anevázme*). But the Greek term φλόγα “(erotic) heat” has been reanalysed as *floy-* plus the postposed article *-a*, resulting in a word that contains a sound [ɣ] for which Albanian spelling has no letter (Tsitsipis 1991, p. 163 and footnote 7). The example demonstrates that even where the boundaries between languages are fluent and ambiguous, coding systems cannot reproduce the fluidity of these boundaries and have to work in an either/or fashion, in this case requiring compromise notations like *floy* which neither belong to Albanian nor Greek orthog-

<sup>9</sup> The same example has been used in Fabricius et al. [forthcoming](#).

raphy. Thus, the lack of a clear borderline between the discursive resources of the speakers taken from the two languages forces a denaturalized transcription on the analyst.

Interaction in languages traditionally written with Chinese characters would require transcripts using Chinese characters (supplemented by kana for Japanese), since this is the only naturalized form of entextualization available. This does not mean that retextualization always is without problems. The following example might make this clearer, although we do not deal with a transcript here but rather two texts created from scratch, one spoken and one written, with undefined or irrelevant directionality.

In Hong Kong, a few years ago one could hear two loudspeaker announcements before the train of the Mass Transit Railway reaches Sha Tin station (along with their English equivalent, which does not have to concern us here, “Next station is Sha Tin”); at the same time two texts were displayed on the screen on the wall of the carriage which corresponded to the announcement (but were, of course, not fully synchronized with it).<sup>10</sup>

下一站是沙田  
下一站係沙田

Now, the first text (both spoken and written) is in Standard Mandarin (Putonghua), and the second in Cantonese. Putonghua and Cantonese use the same script,<sup>11</sup> and while spoken Cantonese and spoken Putonghua are not mutually intelligible, the written forms of the two dialects are rather more similar or even identical, especially in higher registers. (It is not true that “all dialects of Chinese are written the same way but sound different”; rather it is rarely the case that dialects of Chinese are written at all—with a few exceptions, the most important being Cantonese, cf. Snow (2004)).

All six syllables in the example sound different pairwise, but in the written version, only one character is different, viz. the copula (係 *haih* vs. 是 *shì*<sup>12</sup>). Hence we know that 沙田 is to be read *sātihn* if it follows the Cantonese copula 係 *haih* and *shātían* if it follows the Putonghua copula 是 *shì*. In the transcription of an interaction that contains both Putonghua and Cantonese, this contextualization or retextualization may not always be unambiguously available.

In another interview from our CALPIU material, a Mainland Chinese student who speaks both Putonghua, Cantonese and English talks about situations where she might mix the linguistic repertoires available to her. If one only had the naturalized Chinese transcript available (first line of the excerpt), one could not always

<sup>10</sup> These displays do not exist anymore in this form in 2014; now only one written representation is displayed, replacing the copula (係 and 是, resp.) with a colon. The spoken announcement is still in Cantonese and Putonghua. Special thanks to Jim Lo who did the research on this for us, and David Li who facilitated the contact.

<sup>11</sup> That it is common to use traditional forms of these characters in Hong Kong even for Putonghua, while standardized simplified forms are used on the Mainland, adds a complication we are not going to discuss here; neither that this distinction does not apply to handwritten characters (as opposed to printed ones) quite in the same way.

<sup>12</sup> We use Yale Romanization for Cantonese and pinyin in transliterating Putonghua.

recontextualize any single stretch of utterance as Putonghua or Cantonese. In the following excerpt, two techniques are used simultaneously: In the naturalized transcripts, characters representing Cantonese are underlined. In the transliteration in the second line, Yale Romanization is used rather than pinyin for Cantonese (and underlined for good measure). Finally, in the English gloss, bits said in Cantonese are underlined as well:

1. Student: 但是烤箱廣東話我我我說不好  
Dànshì kǎoxiāng guǎngdōng huà wǒ wǒ wǒ shuō bu hǎo  
I can't say 'oven' in Cantonese properly
2. 那時候我就會問 Linda 她們啊然後  
nà shíhòu wǒ jiù huì wèn Linda tāmen a ránhòu  
Then I got to ask Linda or the others.
3. 但是我問她們我會說  
dànshì wǒ wèn tāmen wǒ huì shuō  
But I ask them, I would say
4. 額我想問下呢個 烤箱 點用呀  
ngáahk ngóh séung mahn hah nē go kǎoxiāng dím yuhng a  
ehm I wanted to know how to use this oven.

In line 4, the student quotes herself speaking Cantonese to her roommates, but switches in her report into Putonghua for the word 烤箱. From the transcript itself, one would not be able to see that this is meant to represent Putonghua *kǎoxiāng* rather than Cantonese *háausèung*, unless one uses the “denaturalizing” transliteration—which may be helpful for readers not familiar with Chinese script anyway.

## 10 Concluding Remark

In our discussion, we have singled out several aspects of representation of multiple voices in interaction, and shown from examples in the existing literature how researchers have reacted to this challenge. We believe our discussion has underscored Green et al.'s very important point that transcription is never “just talk written down” (Green et al. 1997, p. 172). Looking at transcripts as entextualizations and discussing granularity as an issue that relates to the possible retextualization gives us—as we hope—a better starting point for discussing transcription practices with a view to the representation of multiple voices and the nature of multilingual talk.

**Acknowledgment** This chapter goes back to various presentations by the authors in Hong Kong (March 2010 and May 2011), Roskilde (June 2010) and Osaka (March 2012), for the latter see Haberland (2012), which has been re-used in this chapter to a certain degree, and Hazel and Mortensen (2012). In spite of some hints in Haberland and Mey (1977, p. 8) on transcription and fetishization, the ideas about transcription we present here have mainly been developed in recent years in discussions with colleagues at the CALPIU Research Center in Roskilde, especially Spencer Hazel, and in part also with members of RCLEAMS in Hong Kong. We are grateful to Sonja Barfod, Anne H. Fabricius, Mads J. Kirkebak, Kamilla Kraft

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# Metadiscursive Strategies in Dialogue: Legitimising Confrontational Rhetoric

Cornelia Ilie

**Abstract** The metadiscourse used in institutional dialogue is envisaged in this investigation as a set of discursively and rhetorically structured utterances meant to contextualise, as well as overstate or understate the interlocutors' statements with respect to the degree of involvement, topical explicitness, positioning, interpersonal rapport and audience appeal. The main goal is to analyse the interplay between shifting metadiscursive strategies and ritualised discursive practices by examining instances of parliamentary interaction that shape participant role shifts, private-public communicative interfaces, and multiple audience targeting strategies.

A rhetorically significant category of metadiscursive strategies used to surreptitiously introduce controversial comments are the *rhetorical parentheticals*. In terms of their position and role in the discourse, two main types of metadiscursive parentheticals have been identified in institutional dialogic interaction: parentheticals that function as *inserted metadiscourse* (occurring either by juxtaposition, before, after or between whole discursive units) and parentheticals that function as *embedded metadiscourse* (occurring between two constituents of one specific discursive unit).

A pragma-rhetorical approach has been adopted for the analysis of various types of metadiscursively functioning parentheticals in order to identify shifts and overlaps between the personal and interpersonal levels and to examine multi-level correlations between the interlocutors' articulations of complementary or competing representations and interpretations. Context-specific examples illustrate how interlocutors use parentheticals to adjust their discourse to shifting rhetorical situations, vary the effects of their rhetorical appeals by addressing interchangeably or simultaneously several audiences and choose to reinforce/cancel previous assumptions referentially, relationally and/or evaluatively.

**Keywords** Metadiscourse, Institutional dialogue, Parliamentary, Pragma-rhetorical approach, Parentheticals

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## 1 Introduction

In dialogue, as in human communication in general, every utterance is susceptible of multiple interpretations and can have multiple effects. The forms and meanings of dialogic utterances, uttered both in the private and the public sphere reflect, and at the same time shape, challenge and reshape the sociocultural norms and institutional practices of a community. Since the words we use have various histories, each new usage carries with it implications, connotations and consequences that we cannot always fully anticipate. This may account for the fact that in various contexts, dialogic communication displays a dynamics of discovery, self-discovery and other-discovery. Indeed, a dialogue is not only a complex communicative event; it is an encounter of people with characteristics, styles, values and assumptions that shape the particular ways in which they engage in interaction. In dialogue, we are constantly negotiating interpretations attributed to the interlocutors' speech acts and thereby we are implicitly co-constructing the meanings emerging from ongoing interactions.

When exploring the nature, structure and functions of dialogue it is important to examine not just what people say but also *how they say it* and *how they are heard* by their interlocutors and by other participants in varying situations and under varying circumstances. Metadiscourse (see definitions in Sect. 2, below) plays a significant role in dialogue by conveying in different ways the speaker's own intentions and the hearer(s)'s presumed expectations, as well as contextually relevant cues and background information. It is through metadiscursive devices that speakers frame their ongoing discourse (present and past) in relation to context (time, place, internal and external circumstances), co-participants (interlocutor/s, audience) and the co-participants' discourse. Typically, metadiscursive utterances can be regarded as enacting *rhetorical actions* such as explain, show, argue, claim, deny, suggest, contrast, add, expand, summarise. Depending on the context, metadiscourse serves to identify and highlight situational and discourse elements, while at the same time functioning as a part of the sequential or hierarchical organisation of discourse. Reflecting, as well as shaping attitudes and beliefs, metadiscursive utterances are instrumental in unveiling the participants' conceptual and ideological assumptions by which particular communication practices become institutionalised and understood.

Metadiscourse is a complex phenomenon which includes various manifestations of the participants' cognitive and intercommunicative acts aimed at controlling, adjusting and negotiating the goals and the effects of their and of their interlocutors' ongoing talk. Like discourse, metadiscourse does not represent a natural category and consequently it can be defined with regard to different kinds of communicative situations, in different ways, and for different purposes. This is the reason why so far, neither speech act theory nor discourse analysis or sociolinguistics, can fully account for the multilayered functions of metadiscourse. Instead of defining metadiscourse as a level of language, or a distinct unit separate from primary discourse, metadiscourse can profitably be conceptualised as a *rhetorical strategy* used by speakers to reflect and talk about their own talk (Crismore 1989, p. 86). Consequently, *metadiscourse* is envisaged in this study as a set of rhetorically structured

communicative and interactional strategies used by speakers to signal, highlight, mitigate or cancel parts of their ongoing discourse, and their varying relevance to different audiences (Bateson 1972/1955; Leech 1983; Tannen 1984). For analytical purposes, the perspectives of pragmatics and rhetoric enable us to identify the ways in which participants negotiate, construct and change identities through the process of dialogue. In many contexts, such as courtroom trials, parliamentary debates and political election campaigns, the representation and evaluation of identity-related issues and values may constitute the primary purpose of dialogue.

## 2 Defining Metadiscourse

Finding a relevant and appropriate definition of metadiscourse may prove to be rather problematic. While the Polish logician Tarski was the first to use the term metalanguage in the 1930s, the distinction between language and metalanguage is reported to have been signalled by Pāṇini at a much earlier date (ca. 350 BCE). More recently, Jakobson (1960) identified six types of language functions through the way that texts can be related to different components of the speech situation, namely addresser (e.g. *I* or *we*, personal or institutional), message (e.g. whose meaning?), addressee (e.g. what particular addressee(s)?), context (e.g. intertextual correlation), code, and channel. According to him, the speech situation includes language as one of its components and as one of the objects of speech. Consequently, the code is regarded as the basis for a *metalinguistic function*. Following that line of reasoning, Bateson (1972/1955) distinguishes between *metalinguistic messages*, where the subject of discourse is language, and *metacommunicative messages*, where the subject of discourse is the relationship between speakers. Referring to the functions of dialogue, Stati (1982) uses the term *metadialogica*, which involves three main elements: phatic, metasemantic and metapragmatic. Particularly useful is his inclusion of the temporal frame pointing to a past moment, a past and present moment or a present (concomitant) moment. Later on, Noh (1996) and Papafragou (2000) use a relevance-theoretic approach to explore the phenomenon of *metarepresentation* in language. The same linguistic phenomenon has been labelled *reflexivity* by Hockett (1963), Silverstein (1976), Lyons (1977) and Lucy (1993): “the same language is operating simultaneously in two functional modes as it serves as both the means and the object of communication” (Lucy 1993, p. 9). A rhetorical definition of metadiscourse is provided by Walter Nash:

[M]etadiscourse is a kind of commentary, made in the course of speaking or writing. The essential feature of this commentary is that it is not appended to the text, like a footnote or a postscript, but is incorporated with it, in the form of words and phrases fitted in to the unfolding message. (Nash 1992)

As has been pointed out by Nash, the choice of metadiscursive devices is generally dictated by the overall structure of the discourse, communicative purpose, relationship and interplay between the participants, and the level of determination or tentativeness of the interlocutors’ claims. Metadiscursive statements function

rhetorically in the sense that speakers comment specifically on how what they are saying is to be understood by the other dialogue participants. Although metadiscursive statements may appear to involve a disruption in the speaker's discursive continuity, they actually mark relevant correspondences and correlations between the ongoing discourse, on the one hand, and parallel discourses, as well as the interactants concerned, on the other.

Metadiscursive statements exhibit rhetorical shifts between a speaker's varying voices and roles used in relation to his/her interlocutor's voices and roles. The multilayered functioning of metadiscursive statements contributes to creating a *rhetorical coherence* between the sequential and hierarchical levels of parallel and overlapping discourses, on the one hand, and between these discourses and the interactants, on the other. The rhetorical coherence created by metadiscursive strategies is maintained through virtual interaction between the speaker and his/her discourse, on the one hand, and the interlocutors/audience and their discourses, on the other.

Metadiscourse is interpreted as a rhetorical act or strategy for filtering the speakers' standpoints and arguments in their ongoing discourse (Ilie 2000). By means of institutional metadiscourse, speakers adjust their discourse to the situation, to their interlocutors and to their audiences, as well as to their own end goals.

### 3 Metadiscourse in Parliamentary Dialogue

The gradual ritualisation of parliamentary dialogue has been marked by an increasing regularisation of the collective behaviour and specification of individual roles of Members of Parliament (MPs), on the one hand, and by institutionalised form and structure of their verbal interaction, on the other. The adversarial nature of parliamentary dialogue and the confrontational style of interpersonal deliberation are constitutive features of parliaments as norm-regulated and convention-based institutions. As instantiations of both individual and group confrontations, parliamentary debates display competing discursive processes. MPs have to perform publicly in front of a wide audience in accordance with parliamentary rules, while constantly moving between the two poles of their multiple roles, the public ones (as party members, as high officials, as representatives of their constituencies, etc.) and the private ones (as family members, as members of the same electorate that they represent, etc.).

Some of the rhetorically most effective communication strategies in parliamentary dialogue apply at the level of metadiscourse, which does not simply consist of distinct fragments of discursive units and patterns, but includes multiple manifestations of the participants' cognitive and intercommunicative acts. Parliamentary debates *do not only reflect* political and socio-cultural configurations, they also *contribute to shaping* these configurations discursively and rhetorically across party political positions. While displaying a *rhetoric of confrontation and adversariality*, parliamentary debates also involve a *rhetoric of consensus and compromise* (Ilie

2006). As a result, parliamentary metadiscourse is context dependent and is linked to the norms and expectations of a particular institution setting and discourse genre. The institution of parliament is marked by a paradoxical tendency at both discursive and metadiscursive level, namely the observance and preservation of convention (the status quo) versus the manifestation of subversion.

### 3.1 *Rhetorical Forms of Parliamentary Metadiscourse*

Parliamentary debates have been developing into a systematic rhetorical practice to meet ever more complex requirements in a continuously changing social and political reality. They fulfil a major problem-solving function for a wide range of current issues that represent sometimes converging, but often conflicting, interests. Bitzer rightly pointed out that “two or more simultaneous *rhetorical situations* may compete for our attention, as in some parliamentary debates” (1968, p. 12). Consequently, parliamentary discourse can be looked upon as rhetorically constituted in the sense that it is called for by rhetorical situations both as an instrument of reflection, as an instance of deliberation and as a mode of action.

In parliamentary discourse, metadiscursive statements contribute to negotiating and renegotiating interactant positions and commitments since debaters are directly competing for power and authority in the decision-making process (Ilie 2010).

Traditionally, the rhetorical functions of metadiscursive utterances have been divided into three main categories in terms of target orientation:

- *Message-oriented* metadiscourse, which focuses on the structure and content of what is said (some of the more frequently used linguistic markers are: ‘let me begin by’, ‘first of all I shall’, ‘in conclusion’)
- *Hearer-oriented* metadiscourse, which focuses on the way the hearer is to interpret the content of what is said (some of the more frequently used linguistic markers are: ‘in confidence’, ‘between you and me’, ‘frankly’, ‘briefly’)
- *Speaker-oriented* metadiscourse, which focuses on the speaker’s positioning and degree of commitment to what she/he is saying (some of the more frequently used linguistic markers are: ‘apparently’, ‘obviously’, ‘justifiably’, ‘of course’, ‘possibly’, ‘perhaps’)

While these three categories may apply to a number of written discourse genres, the situation tends to get more complicated in the case of oral forms of institutional dialogue, due to the virtual and real polyphony of voices, the constraints of institutional turn-taking systems and the varying reactions of the multilayered audience. In the first place, the notion of message orientation raises a complex and tricky question, namely whose message does the metadiscursive statement refer to? Is it the current speaker’s, the interlocutor’s or a third person’s message? Thus, *message orientation* does not necessarily mean orientation towards the current speaker’s message, it may also mean orientation towards the current or preceding interlocutor’s message, as well as towards a third person’s message, be she/he an MP or not. Similarly, *hearer orientation* or rather, interlocutor orientation can refer not only to

the interlocutor but also to audience orientation, particularly in the case of the dialogic interaction in parliament. These particular orientations often co-occur, which confer varying types of direction, scope and depth on metadiscursive utterances.

The coordination of the various types of metadiscursive orientation and targeting concerns the speakers' local and global strategies of planning, signalling and/or revising their ongoing talk. In order to examine and evaluate the rhetorical strategies that underlie parliamentary metadiscourse, it is necessary to distinguish theoretically and practically three major components of a rhetorically tailored message, namely *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*, although in the analysis proper it is hardly possible, or desirable, to keep them apart. These three elements get actualised in *rhetorical appeals* that provide the addressees and/or audience with reasons and evidence for accepting or rejecting the beliefs, ideas and feelings presented by the speaker (Corbett 1990; Vico 1996). The rhetorical appeals to *logos* are usually referred to as *rational appeals* (or *logical appeals*). The rhetorical appeals to *ethos* are usually referred to as *ethical appeals*. The rhetorical appeals to *pathos* are usually referred to as *emotional appeals* (or *pathetic appeals*).

In terms of discursive *reasoning* (= rhetorical *logos*), a speaker needs to establish a common ground of shared assumptions with the audience. Speakers also rely heavily on rhetorical commonplaces (*topoi*) to single out and correlate particular culture-based meta-representations in each other's interventions. To achieve this, she/he has to reinforce generally held beliefs, values and norms, which are often predictable ingredients of party political ideologies that are being debated in parliament. This may be one of the reasons why rational appeals that occur as parliamentary metadiscourse have often primarily metaterminological functions, as illustrated in (1), or referential functions, as illustrated in (2) below.

(1) Mr. Tom Clarke (Lab): [...] Many poor countries feel that the Uruguay round—the previous big trade round—has brought them few economic benefits and has left them struggling to catch up with the developing world. (Hansard Debates, 24 November, 1999, column 666)

(2) Mr. David Ruffley (Con): [...] It is interesting that, on the [Labour] Government's presentation of economic statistics, Bob Worcester of MORI—who is by no means a Conservative-leaning commentator—recently said: "It is not being clear, it is not being precise... They are putting spin on the statistics and that spin is an affront to the British public [...]". (Hansard Debates, 24 November, 1999, column 679)

When debating particularly technical issues, a primary concern of MPs is to reinforce their *credibility* (= rhetorical *ethos*) by displaying professional competence, political stamina, as well as consistency between their statements and their actions, irrespective of whether they were undertaken as manifestations of their institutional or their private roles (the two roles being often closely interrelated). Hence, metadiscursive statements are often used deliberately to highlight the speakers' professional and/or public image, rather than their positions and arguments on political issues, so as to instil confidence and trust in the addressees and the audience:

(3) Mr. Garnier (Con): [...] Light engineers, shoe manufacturers and the firms that make parts that go into shoes and the products that form parts of other products, such as clothing, are—I have conducted a survey to establish this—suffering from an excess

of regulation and interfering fussiness from the Government [...]. (Hansard Debates, 24 November, 1999, column 699)

MPs' institutional (and often interpersonal) disputes, as well as the question-asking turn-takings during Prime Minister's Question Time, for example, are aimed not so much at genuinely exploring each other's political and personal viewpoints (which they rightly assume to be firmly anchored in their respective ideologies), but rather at capturing the audience's attention and sympathy, i.e. of both fellow MPs and of the public at large. It is the *emotional impact* on the audience (= rhetorical *pathos*) doubled by a charismatic personal image that political speakers intend to achieve through the enactment of their rhetorical strategies. *Pathos* orientation is an essential part of the usual expectations of English audiences attending political debates, namely the wish to be entertained while witnessing a battle of wits.

(4) Mr. Bercow (Con): I am grateful to the Foreign Secretary [Mr. Cook, Lab] for giving way. No sensible person—from which category one should probably exclude the right hon. Gentleman—would favour European Union enlargement at any price. (Hansard Debates, 22 November, 1999, column 367)

By making a metadiscursive comment that starts on a serious note and ends on a sarcastic note, Conservative MP Bercow tries to meet the audience's expectations, namely combining predictable with unpredictable elements, institutional with interpersonal elements. This example is an illustration of the fact that parliamentary metadiscourse combines both *institutional* and (*inter*)*personal metadiscourse*, which function rhetorically in complementary ways. Metadiscursive utterances help to situate their utterers' standpoints with respect to their own (present and past) discourse, their interlocutor's discourse and/or other interactants' discourse.

### 3.2 *A Pragma-Rhetorical Approach to Parliamentary Metadiscourse*

The political confrontation in parliament involves testing arguments, developing persuasive strategies and counteracting verbal attacks. MPs are fully aware of the fact that it is not realistic to hope to persuade their fellow MPs: Since their political positions are based on ideological commitments, they are hardly likely to change sides. So, what MPs generally hope to achieve is to put in a good and convincing show, to show off, in order to eventually outperform their political adversaries. The rhetorical gain consists in reinforcing their own positions by embarrassing and even humiliating the political adversaries, by jeopardising their credibility, by making them lose face.

Pragmatically and rhetorically, institutional metadiscourse points to specific discourse elements, while at the same time it is part of the sequential or hierarchical organisation of discourse itself. This has important consequences with regard to the discursive and rhetorical functions of metadiscourse. A rhetorically significant metadiscursive strategy which is frequently used by MPs is the strategy of

surreptitiously introducing controversial comments in the form of *rhetorical parentheticals*. These parentheticals correspond quite closely to what rhetoricians call *parenthesis*, “a word, phrase or sentence inserted as an aside in a sentence complete in itself” (Lanham 1991). The pragma-rhetorical functions of parentheticals can be summed up as follows:

By means of parentheticals, speakers adjust their ongoing discourse to the situation, to their interlocutors and to their audiences, as well as to their own end-goals. In doing that, their discourse shifts from the role as speakers to the role as observers and commentators. (Ilie 2003)

Parliamentary parentheticals represent instances of rhetorical metadiscourse which is used to signal a shift towards interlocutor-oriented, message-oriented and/or multiple audience-oriented talk, or an evaluation of the tone, style and content of other MP interventions, as in (5) below:

(5) Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Skye and Inverness, West): Can I associate myself entirely with the sentiments that have been so properly and well expressed? In terms of our national transportation policy, *if that is not a contradiction in terms*, we have chaos on the railways, gridlock on the roads and parliamentary revolts over air traffic control. If the Prime Minister wins a second term, will the Deputy Prime Minister still be in charge of all those things? (Hansard Debates, 29 November, 2000, column 955)

Mr. Charles Kennedy creates a rhetorical ambivalence in that he deliberately refers to “our national transportation policy” only to cancel its actual existence and significance immediately afterwards by introducing the metadiscursive parenthetical “*if that is not a contradiction in terms*”. His argument consists in advancing a key notion whose very existence he indirectly, but forcefully, denies in order to condemn the government’s policies which led to “chaos on the railways, gridlock on the roads and parliamentary revolts over air traffic control”.

In terms of their position in discourse, metadiscursive parentheticals may occur either by juxtaposition, before, after or between whole discursive units, as *inserted metadiscourse* (see Sect. 3.2.1) or they may occur between two constituents of one specific discursive unit, as *embedded metadiscourse* (see Sect. 3.2.2).

### 3.2.1 Inserted Parliamentary Metadiscourse

Inserted parliamentary metadiscourse may occur in three main positions in the utterance: (a) *utterance initial*, when it occurs initially in the utterance; (b) *utterance medial*, when it occurs in the middle of the utterance; and (c) *utterance final*, when it occurs at the end of the utterance. Let us consider an example of the first type of inserted parliamentary metadiscourse, as illustrated in extract (6):

(6) Mr. Deputy Speaker: [...] *I remind the House that*, unless hon. Members shorten their speeches, many other hon. Members will be disappointed. [...]. (Hansard Debates, 11 June, 1998, column 1274)

In this particular instance, the Deputy Speaker uses a performative verb—*to remind*—by means of which he both designates and performs the speech act of reminding MPs the parliamentary rule that requires them to be brief. By virtue of

its institutional goals, this initial metadiscursive utterance is meant to fulfil both rational and ethical appeals. It is obvious that the Deputy Speaker is performing the act of reminding not on his own behalf, but in his official capacity of moderator of the parliamentary dialogue. His intervention from his position of unquestionable institutional authority is meant to be acknowledged as a rhetorical reminder. Significantly enough, it is the Speaker of the House who has the most authoritative role in Parliament precisely because she/he is supposed to act in a politically neutral way and not to express any personal political opinions. In other words, his/her interventions are restricted exclusively to procedural and formal issues.

Utterance-medial parliamentary metadiscourse occurs relatively frequently and an example is provided in excerpt (7) below:

(7) Mrs. Ewing (SNP): [...] In presenting the petition, *I am conscious of the fact that people [...] are keen for the hospice [...]*. (Hansard Debates, 27 February, 1998, Column 606)

In (7), Mrs. Ewing, unlike the Deputy Speaker in (6), uses an inserted metadiscursive statement to convey her own personal perception of a reported institutional fact. In this case, her ethos is reinforced precisely because she shows personal involvement in a political issue that she is responsible for. While the Deputy Speaker speaks normally with one voice, i.e. the institutional voice, Mrs. Ewing speaks with two voices, the institutional voice, on the one hand, and her personal voice, on the other hand.

An instance of utterance-final parliamentary metadiscourse is illustrated in excerpt (8) below.

(8) Ms. Harman: [...] The days are gone when women were as rare a sight in the workplace as men are, even today, in the kitchen. [Interruption]. Not all men, *I hasten to add; [...]*. (Hansard Debates, 27 February, 1998, Column 608 and 609)

Whereas Mrs. Ewing's personal metadiscursive statement in excerpt (6) is meant to reinforce her following institutional message, Ms. Harman's personal metadiscursive statement in (7) is meant to fulfil the opposite function, namely to mitigate the scope of the preceding institutional message. By adding a qualifying statement made in her personal voice to play down the apparently sweeping generalisation made in her institutional voice, Ms. Harman contributes to legitimise her professional credibility. In both cases, however, the rhetorical transition between the two voices, institutional and personal, is marked metadiscursively.

### 3.2.2 Embedded Parliamentary Metadiscourse

In most types of oral interaction, the interactants' utterances usually convey one or several messages, some of which are overtly, and some covertly conveyed. As a rule, a speaker's main message is often conveyed overtly, i.e. is directly inferable from the surface level of his/her utterances, whereas the processing of the speaker's secondary messages usually depends on the contextualisation and intertextuality of the main message. This distinction may help to highlight the co-occurrence in a speaker's utterances of simultaneous messages that are inferable at several discursive and metadiscursive levels.



While inserted parliamentary metadiscourse consists more often than not of rather straightforward metadiscursive statements, embedded parliamentary metadiscourse may consist of both simple and complex metadiscursive statements. Another important distinction regards the nature of the level shifts operated by the two kinds of metadiscourse. While inserted metadiscursive statements often act as strategies of correlation and interplay between discursive and metadiscursive levels, embedded metadiscursive statements usually serve as strategies of correlation and interplay not only between discursive and metadiscursive levels but also between different metadiscursive levels. Let us consider the excerpt in (9) below:

(9) Mr. Taylor (Con): There are two parts to the answer. First, the effects could be addressed through fiscal policy. Secondly—*as I am sure the hon. Gentleman [Mr. Brown, Lab], who studies these matters carefully, knows*—there are fewer differences between European Union countries than between different regions of the United Kingdom. (Hansard Debates, 24 November, 1999, pt 10)

Worth noting in (9) is that there are three distinct levels of embedded metadiscourse in Taylor's parenthetical above: “—*as [I am sure] the hon. Gentleman, [who studies these matters carefully], knows*—”. Each of these metadiscursive levels has its own discursive scope:

- A first metadiscursive level conveys a positive attribution, which is addressed by the current speaker to his interlocutor: “*as [...] the hon. Gentleman knows*”. Its scope covers the whole utterance in the middle of which it is embedded.
- A second metadiscursive level serves to reinforce the positive attribution of the first metadiscursive level by invoking further evidence, which at the same time appears to be called into question: *who studies these matters carefully*. Unlike the first metadiscursive level, whose scope is restricted to the interlocutor (Labour MP Brown), this second level is meant to target not only the interlocutor but the whole audience of MPs, since it deliberately introduces an evaluative statement about the interlocutor's professional performance.
- A third metadiscursive level is self-reflexive and is meant to emphasise the speaker's *ethos: I am sure*. The scope of this third metadiscursive level is wider than that of the previous metadiscursive utterances, since it covers both the embedded metadiscourse and the discursive unit that it refers to. It is meant to implicitly legitimise the other two embedded metadiscursive statements.

While in both inserted and embedded metadiscursive statements it is equally necessary to examine and scrutinise the interplay between the interactants' institutional and personal voices, in the case of embedded metadiscursive statements it is also important to identify and analyse the speakers' strategies of juxtaposing, overlapping and/or intertwining different metadiscursive levels. A systematic and consistent analysis of embedded metadiscourse should be able to point out the correlations between the interlocutors' representational and discursive processes, on the one hand, and to account for the shifts and overlaps between interpersonal and institutional levels, as well as between metadiscourse and discourse, on the other.

The metadiscursive level of parliamentary discourse helps to articulate particular aspects of speaker–interlocutor and/or speaker–audience relations. This involves particularly speaker role shifts, discursive scope widening/narrowing and multiple-audience targeting, re/definition of terms and concepts, minimising/maximising accountability and merit, challenging facts and statistics.

Metadiscursive utterances, like their utterers, are simultaneously situated within and/or beyond, the discourse proper, i.e. they may refer to and be a part of either the sequential or the hierarchical organisation of discourse. Moreover, as has been pointed out by Caffi, “metapragmatic competence is potentially subversive, for instance, when it enables the hearer to verify whether the preparatory conditions of appropriateness of a speech act are fulfilled” (1998, p. 585). Metadiscursive utterances represent concomitant and accompanying speech acts that comment on, refer to and/or complement particular speech acts that they evaluate at the same time. A special case of this generally held assumption is represented by parliamentary metadiscursive utterances, which may be used to obliquely interpret and evaluate institutional interlocutors, institutional decisions, actions and processes, institutional relations, etc. through the intermediary of the discourse representing them, as illustrated in extract (10):

(10) Mr. Tony Worthington (Lab): [...] I am one of those who want the United States to be fully on board: we must not give way to the isolationist tendencies in the US that would seek to take it out of international relations. I am thinking of the Republican right wing—*the moral majority, as it would call itself, although I do not agree*—which seeks to undermine the deal that was done in Cologne, and the deal that was done with the International Monetary Fund in Washington with regard to debt. (Hansard Debates, 22 November, 1999, column 415)

Multilayered metadiscursive sequences have both specific and overlapping metadiscursive functions. As in (9) above, the co-occurring and/or overlapping metadiscursive messages may be simultaneously perceived as partly institutional (*the moral majority, as it would call itself*), and partly interpersonal (*although I do not agree*).

In parliamentary debates, the structuring of utterances is conditioned by what the interlocutors assume about each other’s mental representation of the world, such as cognitive structures, social constraints and political experience. While engaging in a ritualised debate, the interlocutors use and take advantage of institutional practices to exploit each other’s weaknesses and vulnerabilities. MPs’ can be seen to challenge, ridicule and question their opponents’ *ethos*, which in its turn contributes to increasing the intensity of their own *pathos* (see Ilie 2001). At the same time, their interaction is constantly marked by a deep awareness of acting for and in front of several sets of audiences that may often have decisive roles to play in the development and outcome of the interaction. During the process of establishing and reinforcing a viable relationship with these audiences, speakers in parliament are actually involved in strengthening their own *ethos*, i.e. personal credibility and institutional reliability.

## 4 Conclusions

One of the most significant and revealing instances of interpersonal and intertextual strategies in dialogue is the speakers' use of *metadiscourse*. The metadiscourse used in institutional settings is envisaged in the present study as a set of rhetorically structured utterances meant to contextualise, as well as overstate or understate the speakers' discursive contributions with respect to the degree of involvement, topical explicitness, interpersonal rapport and institutional dissent patterns.

A pragma-rhetorical analysis of metadiscursive strategies has the advantage of enabling the identification of shifts and overlaps between the personal and interpersonal levels and to account for the varying correlations between the interlocutors' articulations of complementary or contradictory representational and interpretative processes. Moreover, in the case of parliamentary metadiscourse, this frame of analysis makes it possible to identify the MPs' tactical role in using institutionally specific interdiscursive strategies, such as challenging and attacking political adversaries by means of parenthetically introduced ironical and sarcastic observations.

Parentheticals can be defined as foregrounding and backgrounding rhetorical strategies that filter the speakers' standpoints and arguments in their ongoing discourse. By means of parentheticals, MPs adjust their discourse to shifting rhetorical situations, vary the effects of their rhetorical appeals by addressing interchangeably or simultaneously several audiences, and choose to reinforce/cancel previous assumptions referentially, relationally and/or evaluatively. With regard to their position in discourse, metadiscursive parentheticals may occur either by juxtaposition, before, after or between whole discursive units, as *inserted metadiscourse*, or they may occur between two constituents of a particular discursive unit, as *embedded metadiscourse*. Whether explicitly or implicitly, parliamentary parentheticals are meant to provide evidence or invoke arguments reinforcing the ideological position and the political authority of speaking MPs at the expense of their political adversaries.

By means of parliamentary parentheticals a range of rhetorical shifts operate at the metadiscursive level as local or global strategies of planning, signalling, explicating, justifying and/or evaluating competing positions. These processes are best discernible on a pragma-rhetorical approach, which can help to get an insight into the interactive strategies used in interpersonal and institutional confrontations in parliamentary dialogue.

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# ***Porque* in Spanish Oral Narratives: Semantic *Porque*, (Meta)Pragmatic *Porque* or Both?**

**Sarah E. Blackwell**

**Abstract** This study examines the use of the Spanish connective *porque* ('because') in the oral narratives of 30 native speakers of Peninsular Spanish who watched *The pear film* (Chafe 1980) and were asked to retell it. Analysis of 127 instances of *porque* in the narratives reveals that it is used semantically in relations of *consequence–cause*, and pragmatically in epistemic (*conclusion–argument*) and speech act (*utterance–motivation*) relations, coinciding with the three categories of causal relations identified by Sweetser (1990). Furthermore, the study shows how the narrators use *porque* constructions to refer back to and reflect on their speech metapragmatically. Reflexive (i.e., metapragmatic) language deals with “the way language is able to reflect on itself, make statements about itself, question itself, improve itself, quote itself and so on” (Mey 2001, p. 177). The *porque* relations in the narratives were analyzed using heuristic paraphrase tests to distinguish epistemic and speech act (pragmatic) causal relations from semantic ones. The analysis shows how *porque*, when used pragmatically, communicates more than its literal semantic sense of cause, giving rise to what could be considered a Gricean implicature, involving a metapragmatic commentary. Although generally, the *porque* relations in the narratives have either a semantic or a pragmatic reading, in some cases, they may have both.

**Keywords** Connectives · Inferential pragmatics · Argumentation · Causal · Causality · Coherence relations · Implicature · Narratives

## **1 Introduction**

This study examines causal relations expressed with the Spanish connective *porque* ('because') in the oral narratives of 30 Spanish speakers from northeastern Spain who watched *The pear film* (Chafe 1980) and were then asked to retell it. Analysis

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of the *porque* utterances in the narratives shows how they may have a semantic or a pragmatic interpretation, and in some cases, potentially both readings; and, when causal relations with *porque* are pragmatic, they also serve a metapragmatic purpose.

Reyes (2002) defines the term *metapragmatic* as a pragmatic perspective or “consciousness,” whereby speakers analyze and evaluate linguistic facts by taking into consideration their own participation, intentions, and deliberate use of language in discourse. She illustrates how a Spanish speaker evaluates the appropriateness of a linguistic choice via an implicit metapragmatic comment introduced by the causal connective *porque* (Reyes 2002, p. 25, my translation):

- (1) Juan ha llegado a casa, *porque* está el coche en la puerta.  
 ‘John has arrived at home, because the car is at the door.’

As Reyes explains, the speaker’s metapragmatic reflection is contained in the use of *porque*, since it articulates the relation between the fact that the speaker says that John has arrived, on the one hand, and the presence of the car at the door, on the other. Based on the presence of the car, the speaker is able to infer and thus conclude that John has arrived. Furthermore, the *porque*-clause serves the purpose of reflective commentary, as the speaker offers an explanation or justification for his/her preceding utterance. Thus, in Gricean terms, *porque* communicates more than the literal semantic meaning of the connective, producing an implicature such as *lo digo porque* (‘I’m saying it because’) (Reyes 2002, p. 25).<sup>1</sup> One of the Spanish narrators in the present study uses *porque* metapragmatically, as she describes the first scene of *the pear film*:<sup>2</sup>

- (2) S7: ... Entonces está un un peón *porque* se se ve- yo creo que *se ve* claramente que no son tuyas las m- las peras.  
 ‘... Then a a farmhand is there *because* you you see- I think that you see clearly that the uh- the pears aren’t his.’

Here, the speaker does not explain *why* “a farmhand is there” (*está un peón*), but rather why the speaker *inferred* that the man in the film she had just watched was merely a worker and not the landowner. The *porque*-clause is meant to justify the narrator’s inference and may be paraphrased as meaning (i.e., implicating) *lo he deducido/inferido/concluido porque* (‘I deduced/inferred/concluded it because’). Furthermore, as in (1), *porque* in (2) functions discourse deictically by implicitly referring to the previous discourse, which is pronominalized in the implicated paraphrase by the pronoun *lo* (‘it’).

<sup>1</sup> Bardzokas (2012, Chap. 2) presents convincing arguments against the idea that causal connectives can produce Gricean implicatures, including the three types of implicature Grice identified (particularized, generalized, and conventional). Addressing this important question is beyond the scope of this study; notwithstanding, I argue that *porque*, when used in pragmatic causal relations, implicates more than the literal sense of “cause of a consequence,” which may be calculated from the words uttered and the context.

<sup>2</sup> Each of the thirty participants who retold the film was assigned a number (e.g., “S7” in (2) refers to “Speaker 7”).

In the present study, the causal relations with *porque* in 30 Spanish pear film narratives are analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively in terms of their meaning, function, frequency, and the contextual features characterizing their use, following a discourse-analytical approach. Specifically, I analyze the *porque* relations in the narratives using heuristic paraphrase tests to determine whether they are semantic relations expressing consequences and causes, or pragmatic relations that provide arguments to support conclusions or motivations for the realization of speech acts. I also aim to identify the contextual features that characterize (and thus help to signal) these causal relations and to show how pragmatic *porque* functions metapragmatically in the narratives. It was hypothesized that (1) pragmatic causal constructions with *porque* would implicitly refer to the previous discourse, thus realizing a discourse-deictic function and conversationally implicating more than their literal meaning, which may be paraphrased; and (2), these causal relations would typically involve the speakers' expression of subjectivity, conveyed by deictic (i.e., first-person) references to themselves and/or a display of "an attitude towards the predicated information" (Sanders and Spooren 1997, p. 91) and through the narrators' evaluation and interpretation of aspects of the film, often reflecting socially and culturally based expectations (see also Blackwell 2010). This second hypothesis echoes Tannen's (1980) observation about causality in her study of American English and Greek women's narrations of *the pear film*, namely, that "[a]ny explanation of causality is in effect an interpretation; a film cannot 'show' *why* something happened" (Tannen 1980, p. 74).

The following section defines metapragmatics in greater depth and identifies some of the metapragmatic functions of language. Section 3 discusses the categories or "domains" of causal relation defined in earlier studies and how causal relations have been distinguished heuristically with regard to domain. A discussion of earlier treatments of Spanish *porque* follows in Sect. 4. The methods used to elicit, record, and transcribe the Spanish pear film narratives are outlined in Sect. 5. In Sect. 6, the *porque* constructions in the narratives are analyzed in terms of domain (i.e., as pertaining to the semantic, epistemic, or speech act domain, or possibly more than one domain), the contextual features characterizing them (including indicators of subjectivity), and their metapragmatic and discourse-deictic functions. The study's main findings and conclusions are summarized in the final section.

## 2 Metapragmatic Uses of Language

As Hübler and Bublitz note, "*metapragmatics* is a fairly new term, which still allows for a number of variant readings" (Hübler and Bublitz 2007, p. 1). For the present study, we shall adopt one of Caffi's three definitions of metapragmatics, namely, that of "management of discourse" (Caffi 1994, p. 2464),<sup>3</sup> which includes

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<sup>3</sup> Caffi defines three senses of metapragmatics. The first refers to our talking about, describing, and debating the field of pragmatics; the second explains "the conditions which make speakers' use of

a speaker's judgment of his/her own and other people's communicative behavior as well as his/her control of, planning of, and feedback on the ongoing interaction (Hübler and Bublitz 2007, p. 7). Fundamental to this sense of metapragmatics is John Lucy's (1993) concept of *reflexivity*, i.e., using language reflexively "to speak about speech, that is, to communicate about the activity of using language" (Lucy 1993, p. 9). As Lucy explains, reflexive language can "tell listeners how to interpret the speech they are hearing" (Lucy 1993, p. 10). Moreover, Mey (2001) observes that it deals with "the way language is able to reflect on itself, make statements about itself, question itself, improve itself, quote itself and so on" (Mey 2001, p. 177). He notes, for instance, that speakers can use reflexive language to announce their flouting of a politeness principle (Mey 2001, p. 177):

- (3) You did a great job, and I'm not being polite.

Here, the speaker explains how the hearer should understand what she/he meant by "You did a great job," and the latter half of the utterance is a "typical self-reflexive metapragmatic statement" (Mey 2001, p. 177).

According to Hübler and Bublitz (2007), metapragmatic strategies include the use of contextualization cues, defined by Gumperz (1989) as "a class of verbal signs...that serve to relate what is said on any particular time-bound occasion to knowledge acquired through past experience" (Gumperz 1989, p. 77), and "one of a cluster of indexical signs...produced in the act of speaking that jointly index, that is invoke, a frame of interpretation for the rest of the linguistic content of the utterance" (Gumperz 1996, p. 379). Causal connectives may therefore be considered contextualization cues, since they help signal how the utterances they connect ought to be interpreted.

The metapragmatic use of language involves any reference to or labeling of previous speech, and any act of "attending to speech," which, according to Hübler and Bublitz, often occurs when there is some sort of communicative breakdown or disturbance, as in the following utterances (from Hübler and Bublitz 2007, p. 8, italics theirs):

- (4) *...why are you getting so aggressive all of a sudden?; why do you say that?; that's not an answer....*

Such meta-utterances mark "a shift from one plane of action to another (e.g., from narration to debate), from a coherent to a less coherent text...[and] from a neutral to an evaluatively laden mode..." (Hübler and Bublitz 2007, p. 8). In other words, metapragmatic utterances can shift a speaker's frame, that is, the activity he/she is participating in when speaking, from one frame to another.<sup>4</sup>

According to Sweetser's (1990) proposal for the classification of causal connectives, *because* can have a speech act reading, as in the following example (Sweetser 1990, p. 77):

- (5) What are you doing tonight, because there's a good movie on.

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language possible and effective" (Caffi 1994, p. 2461); and the third, adopted here, involves the "management of discourse" (Caffi 1994, p. 2464).

<sup>4</sup> For more on this notion of frame, see for example, Bateson (1972), Goffman (1981), Tannen (1979/1993), and Blackwell (2009).



As Sweetser explains, "...the *because*-clause gives the cause of the speech act embodied by the main clause. The reading is something like 'I ask what you are doing tonight because I want to suggest that we go see this good movie'" (Sweetser 1990, p. 77). Here, the act of asking the question is "motivated" or "enabled" by the speaker's knowledge that there is a good movie on (Sanders and Sweetser 2009, p. 2). We can also view this *because*-clause as serving a metapragmatic purpose, since the speaker inevitably reflects on his/her question in offering the motivation for realizing it.

The functions of metapragmatic expressions include monitoring, commenting on, or assessing the appropriateness of one's own or another speaker's discourse, expressing a negative or positive attitude toward a portion or aspect of the discourse—a function often subsumed under the broader umbrella term *evaluation* (see, e.g., Thompson and Hunston 2000), attempting to gain the floor or change the topic (organizing, turn-taking, topic management), building rapport, respecting face needs, expressing empathy, and negotiating potentially problematic stances by using mitigating utterances such as "*Excuse me for saying this in such a XX way*" (Hübler and Bublitz 2007, p. 16, italics theirs). For the present study, the focus is on how and to what extent Spanish causal relations with the connective *porque* function pragmatically, and at the same time metapragmatically, enabling speakers to reflect on their preceding discourse. First, however, we shall examine how different types of causal relations have been identified and categorized.

### 3 Distinguishing Semantic and Pragmatic Causal Relations

Sanders and Sweetser (2009) note that speakers of all languages use connectives (e.g., English *because*, *since*, *therefore*, *so*, and phrases like *as a result*, *that's why*) to express causal relations in discourse, and that "all humans in all cultures seem to interpret the world in terms of causal relations" (Sanders and Sweetser 2009, p. 1). While numerous studies have been carried out on causality over the past two decades (see, e.g., Couper-Kuhlen and Kortmann 2000; Sanders and Sweetser 2009), one of the most influential works is that of Sweetser (1990), who proposed three domains of causal conjunctions, *content*, *epistemic*, and *speech act*, to account for ambiguities in their meaning. Sanders and Sweetser (2009, p. 2) illustrate these categories with Sweetser's (1990) examples:

- (6) John came back because he loved her. (content)  
(i.e. the loving caused him to return)
- (7) The neighbors are not home because the lights are out. (epistemic)  
(i.e. the observation that the lights are out causes the conclusion that the neighbors are away)
- (8) Since you're so smart, when was George Washington born? (speech act)  
(i.e. the question is presumed to be motivated or enabled by the addressee's claim to superior intelligence)

Sweetser's content causal relations, referred to by others as "ideational," "external," and "semantic" (Sanders and Sweetser 2009, p. 2), relate causes to consequences because of their propositional content, i.e., due to the locutionary meaning of the segments.<sup>5</sup> They are governed by real-world restrictions and state a cause or reason for what happened. Epistemic causals indicate that the speaker's knowledge, acquired through past experience, leads him/her to a conclusion (Sweetser 1990, p. 77). In such cases, by relating his/her reasoning to a conclusion, "the speaker is often reasoning from effect to probable cause" (Dancygier and Sweetser 2009, p. 123). By contrast, speech act causals "explain why the speaker realizes the speech act that is expressed by uttering the main clause" (Goethals 2010, p. 2205). Thus, epistemic causals involve conclusions deduced from a fact that is presented as evidence (i.e., asserted) and therefore may be derived from semantic causal relations (provided that the relations are based on common, real-world assumptions); however, in the case of speech act causals, the relation is not derivable from the semantic meanings of the propositions. The potential for ambiguity between a semantic and an epistemic reading, and the possibility of deriving an epistemic reading from a semantic one, are evident in the following example from Sanders (1997, p. 128):

- (9) The neighbours are not at home because there is a party downtown. (semantic or pragmatic?)

Here, the fact that there is a party downtown may serve as either the semantic reason why the neighbors are not home; but alternatively, the speaker's knowledge that there is a party downtown could serve as evidence leading him/her to conclude that the neighbors are not home.

Oversteegan (1997), in her study of Dutch causal and contrastive connectives, poses the question, "What does it mean for a connective to be interpreted pragmatically?" (Oversteegan 1997, p. 51). She observes that most earlier definitions of the pragmatic use of connectives made mention of speech acts, but adds that pragmatic uses of connectives also involve "internal acts of concluding" that pertain to Sweetser's (1990) epistemic domain (Oversteegan 1997, p. 52). Oversteegan explains that this domain of "psychological status" includes "emotion, possibility, probability, and necessity as judged by the speaker/writer" (Oversteegan 1997, p. 52).

The pragmatic nature of certain causal relations seems to lie in the underlying implicatures they give rise to, which, as the following example from Sweetser illustrates, may be paraphrased in terms of the speaker's intentional meaning (Sweetser 1990, p. 79):

- (10) The answer is on page 200, since you'll never find it for yourself.

Sweetser paraphrases (10) as "I make this assertion because it gives you information which you can't acquire independently. A Gricean condition of informativeness is thus invoked as the 'cause' of a statement" (Sweetser 1990, p. 79). Oversteegan (1997) suggests that the more general, "basic scheme" for (10) may be stated as

<sup>5</sup> The terms *semantic* and *content* are used interchangeably in this article to refer to the same category of causal relations.

“Given that you’ll never find a particular entity for yourself, I will tell you where it is” (Oversteegan 1997, p. 58). Notwithstanding, speech act causal relations, as well as epistemic causal ones, appear to be characterized by the *paraphrasability* of the speaker’s intentional meaning, that is, his/her implicature.

Summarizing, in semantic causal relations, two real-world events are connected in terms of consequence and cause; however, both epistemic and speech act relations are essentially pragmatic. In the case of the former, the speaker provides an argument or justification for an inference or conclusion, whereas in the latter, she/he gives the motivation or justification for realizing the speech act expressed in the main clause. As I argue in this study, these categories of pragmatic causal relations may also be considered metapragmatic language use, since the speaker, in each case, explains his/her previous utterance, revealing that she/he is reflecting on its contents.

### 3.1 *Heuristic Tests for Distinguishing Semantic and Pragmatic Causal Relations*

How can we distinguish semantic, epistemic, and speech act causal relations when the same causal connective, *porque*, may be used to express all of them? Sanders (1997) investigates the extent to which these relations can be defined explicitly enough so that they are distinguishable in the analysis of natural texts, and the extent to which their interpretations ultimately depend on the context. He reports a considerable amount of agreement among researchers regarding the observations that in clear cases of speech act relations, it is impossible to construct a causal relation at the propositional level; in prototypical epistemic relations, the writer (or speaker) argues for something she claims to be true, often using “linguistic elements expressing evaluation from the perspective of the author”; and, prototypical content relations “concern events which have already taken place” (Sanders 1997, p. 125). For example, (11a) involves a semantic relation depicting a situation that has taken place, and its coherence is due to “our world knowledge that running causes fatigue” (Sanders 1997, p. 122):

- (11) a. Theo was exhausted because he had run to the university.  
 b. Theo was exhausted, because he was gasping for breath.  
 c. Theo was exhausted, because he told me so.

Sanders explains that (11b) is pragmatic because “the state of affairs in the second segment is not the cause of the state of affairs in the first segment, but rather the *justification* for making that utterance,” although he adds that there is also a “‘real world link’ between a cause (being exhausted) and a consequence (gasping for breath)” (Sanders 1997, p. 122). However, in (11c) there is no real-world causal link between Theo’s being exhausted and his having “told me so,” which enables us to conclude that it is a speech act causal construction (Sanders 1997, p. 122).

To clearly distinguish semantic and pragmatic relations in discourse, Sanders develops an analytical heuristic dubbed the “Basic Operation Paraphrase Test,” which I summarize as follows (adapted from Sanders 1997, p. 126):

- (12) The Basic Operation Paraphrase Test
1. Isolate the two segments that are connected by a coherence relation.
  2. Strip all connectives from the sequence of segments.
  3. Reconstruct the causal basic operation between the propositions P and Q... Paraphrase it by making use of the formulations below and consider which formulation is the best expression of the meaning of the CR [coherence relation] in this context.
    - (i) a. the fact that P causes S[peaker]'s claim/advice/conclusion that Q
    - b. the fact that Q causes S's claim/advice/conclusion that P
    - (ii) a. the fact that P causes the fact that Q
    - b. the fact that Q causes the fact that P

According to Sanders, a relation is pragmatic if one of the type-(i) paraphrases corresponds to the relation as it was originally expressed, whereas it is semantic if one of the type-(ii) paraphrases corresponds to the relation, which he illustrates as follows (Sanders 1997, p. 126–127):

- (13) (i) ?The fact that Theo had been running *causes my claim that* he was exhausted.  
 (ii) The fact that Theo had been running *causes the fact that* he was exhausted.
- (14) (i) The fact that Theo was gasping for breath *causes my claim that* he was exhausted.  
 (ii) ?The fact that Theo was gasping for breath *causes the fact that* he was exhausted.

Paraphrase (13ii) accounts best for (11a) above, revealing that it is semantic; but (14i) corresponds best to (11b), providing evidence that it is pragmatic. However, Sanders cites the following example (repeated from (9) above), which is not clearly semantic or pragmatic (Sanders 1997, p. 128):

- (15) The neighbours are not at home because there is a party downtown. (semantic or pragmatic?)

By applying his paraphrase test, Sanders shows that this utterance is ambiguous, allowing either a semantic interpretation (16a) or a pragmatic (epistemic) one (16b) (Sanders 1997, p. 129):

- (16) a. The fact that there is a party *causes the fact that* the neighbours are not at home.  
 b. The fact that there is a party *causes my claim that* the neighbours are not at home.

However, Sanders notes that we can determine the intended reading from the discourse context:

*In context* it can be determined whether the relation concerns a *Claim-Argument* (“What do you mean, the Carsons are at home tonight. Of course they’re not. The Carsons are not at home, because there is a party downtown. And you know very well they go to every party, those buffoons”), or rather as a description of a state of affairs, a *Consequence-Cause* relation (“My wife is off to sing in the choir, the folks at the opposite side of the street are on a holiday. The Carsons are not at home because there is a party downtown. It is awfully quiet around here.”). (Sanders 1997, p. 129)

Sanders’ paraphrase tests provide a heuristic method for distinguishing semantic and pragmatic causal relations in discourse, as well as causal domain in terms of Sweetser’s three-way content-epistemic-speech-act distinction (Pander Maat and Sanders 2000, p. 60).<sup>6</sup> For instance, when applied to the following utterance from the Spanish pear film narratives, the test reveals that the *porque* relation is semantic:

<sup>6</sup> The type-(ii) paraphrase test could be expanded to include other illocutionary forces besides the three Sanders cites, claim, advice, and conclusion. For instance, we might add other speech acts

- (17) S11: ...en esto intercalan las las imágenes de que el señor, el mismo señor seguía recolectando *porque* no se entera de- de nada.  
 ‘...at this point they intersperse the the images of the man, the same man continued gathering *because* he doesn’t notice a- anything.’

Semantic (type-ii) Paraphrase Test:

The fact that the man doesn’t notice anything causes the fact that he kept picking pears.

Pragmatic (type-i) Paraphrase Test:

?The fact that the man doesn’t notice anything causes my conclusion/claim that he kept picking pears.

Here, the pearpicker’s not noticing what has happened on the ground below him (a boy takes an entire basket of pears from him) is the reason why he continues picking pears as if nothing had happened. Furthermore, like other semantic relations, this *porque* relation is something the speaker recalls as having *taken place*, another feature of semantic causals.

While Sanders’ paraphrase tests are useful for distinguishing between semantic and pragmatic causal relations in sentences, isolating the discourse sequences containing *porque* in the Spanish narratives and reconstructing the causal relations in the narratives with paraphrases of the type *The fact that...causes...* can be somewhat cumbersome. Furthermore, Sanders’ observation that causal relations may be ambiguous (allowing either a semantic or a pragmatic interpretation) means that the analyst may also need to rely on the context to determine causal domain.

Goethals (2010), who analyzes the Spanish causal conjunctions *como*, *ya que* (‘since’) and *pues* (‘because’), suggests that content-related causal clauses may be interpreted as meaning “*the reason why this happened is that*”; epistemic causal constructions may be paraphrased as “*the reason why I think that this is true is that*”; and speech act causals may be paraphrased as “*the reason why I say/ask/order/...this is that...*” (Goethals 2010, p. 2205, italics his). These paraphrases provide an alternative heuristic for distinguishing causal relations that may be less cumbersome than Sanders’ paraphrase tests. When applied to the following *porque* relation from the Spanish pear film narratives, they afford another test for causal domain:

- (18) S2: ...Pero luego pasa un chiquillo con una bicicleta, yo no sé si es que hablaba el señor *porque* no hay voz, o es que mira arriba y se le lleva el cesto.  
 ‘...But later a little boy passes by on a bicycle, I don’t know if it’s just that the man spoke *because* there isn’t any voice, or it’s just that he looks up and takes the basket from him.’
- (i) Speech Act: *The reason why I say that I don’t know if the man spoke is that* there is no voice.  
 (i’) Epistemic: ?*The reason why I think it’s true that I don’t know if the man spoke is that* there is no voice.  
 (ii) Semantic: *The reason why I don’t know if the man spoke is that* there is no voice.

Using Goethals’ paraphrases, we see that both a speech act interpretation of the *porque* relation (18i) and a semantic reading (18ii) are possible, while the epistemic paraphrase yields an infelicitous utterance (18i’). This may be attributed to the fact that the causal relation in (18) is already explicitly epistemic due to the speaker’s use of *yo no sé si...* (‘I don’t know if...’), which directly conveys her reasoning based on her observation that the film had no speech. As such, the construction

constitutes an external act of concluding based on the speaker's extant knowledge, while at the same time there is a semantic link (a possible feature of epistemic relations) between there being no "voice" (i.e., no speech) in the film and not knowing whether or not an actor in the film spoke. Via application of Goethals' paraphrases, we can see that it is possible for speakers to explain both the cause of the speaker's *saying* that she did not know something, rendering the speech act paraphrase in (18i) acceptable, and the cause of her not knowing something, allowing the semantic test to go through in (18ii); but, because the *porque* relation is already overtly epistemic, in that the speaker explains *why* she does not *know* whether or not the man spoke, the epistemic paraphrase test, which we would expect to work in epistemic cases of causality, renders a nonsensical utterance.

An alternative heuristic test, which may be more easily applicable to the Spanish data, lies in Reyes' (2002) proposal that *porque*, when pragmatic, is also metapragmatic, and may be viewed in Gricean terms as communicating more than its literal meaning producing an implicature such as *lo digo porque* ('I'm saying it because') (Reyes 2002, p. 25). Successful insertion of phrases such as *y lo digo/y digo esto* ('and I'm saying it/and I'm saying this'), with discourse-deictic expressions (*lo* 'it'; *esto* 'this') to refer to the utterance before the *porque*-clause, indicates that the *porque* relation in (19) corresponds to the speech act domain; and, insertion of a similar phrase incorporating an epistemic verb of inferring or concluding before *porque* (e.g., *y lo he concluido/inferido* 'and I concluded/inferred it'; or *y he concluido/inferido esto* 'and I concluded/inferred this') reveals that the *porque* relation in (20) is epistemic (inserted metapragmatic phrases appear in curly brackets and italics):

- (19) S4: ...y han vuelto por donde el mismo, estaba el señor de las peras, dando sus tirones al peral que a mí me hacía duelo {*y digo esto*} *porque* al peral hay que tratarlo como unas, las plantas hay que tratarlas como los animales y como las personas, con un poco más de delicadeza. Que me perdone el protagonista.

'...and they returned to where the same [guy], the pear man was, giving the pear tree his yanks and it pained me {*and I'm saying this*} *because* you have to treat the pear tree like some, plants you have to treat like animals and like people, with a little bit of tenderness. I hope the protagonist forgives me.'

- (20) S1: ...y: y he visto me ha parecido de pronto que era como algu: no d'estos que se querían llevar las peras, como un ladronzuelo. Pero después yo he pensado que no. Que debía de ser el amo de la finca, {*y he concluido esto*} *porque* había otro señor que pasaba con una cabra, y: y he visto que no había pues un grito de decirle ¿y usted qué hace allí? Digo este señor será el amo.

'...a:nd and I saw it seemed to me suddenly that he was like one of these types who wanted to take the pears, like a little thief. But later I thought no [i.e. no he wasn't]. That he must have been the owner of the farm, {*and I concluded this*} *because* there was another man who passed by with a goat, a:nd and I saw that there wasn't even a shout to say to him, hey you what are you doing there? I say [i.e. thought to myself] this man is probably the owner.'

By contrast, insertion of either of these phrases into a semantic causal construction from the Spanish narratives renders a pragmatically odd sequence (indicated by?):

- (21) S3: ...a: apartan la piedra que hay en el camino, {*y digo esto*/?*y he concluido esto*} *porque* el chico ha tropezao en aquella.

‘...they m: move the rock that’s in the road aside, {?and I’m saying this/?and I concluded this} because the boy ran over that.’

Both Sanders’ (1997) and Goethals’ (2010) paraphrase tests also confirm that the causal construction in (21) is indeed semantic: The fact that the boy ran over the rock caused the fact that they moved it aside; and, the reason they moved the rock aside is that the boy had run over it. On the one hand, the two events S3 describes are actions that she recalls as having taken place in the film (although the rock was never moved aside in the film); and, the relation involves a real-world link between the cause (the boy’s running over a rock causing his accident) and the consequence: a group of boys removing the cause of the accident so as to avoid any future accidents. Additionally, the semantic relation in (21) is reported more *objectively* than the speech act and epistemic relations in (19) and (20), which are characterized by subjectivity indicators, including deictic (first-person) references to the speakers themselves while they are expressing their personal reactions to, evaluations of, and conclusions about specific scenes in the film. Not surprisingly, subjectivity has been identified as an important factor in distinguishing causal relations, as Sanders and Sweetser (2009, p. 4) point out:

In recent years, we have also seen proposals to replace distinctions like content, epistemic and speech act domains by a subjectivity scale of speaker involvement (Pander Maat and Degand 2001). This scale is a continuum on which content relations such as *cause-consequence* are maximally objective, whereas epistemic relations are very subjective.

This raises the question of what features of a given stretch of discourse may render causal relations more or less subjective, and what discourse features characterize and help confirm causal domain and thus the intended meaning of the *porque* constructions in the narratives. This issue is taken up in the next section.

### 3.2 Causality and Subjectivity

Several studies have linked the notion of subjectivity to the expression of causality in discourse. Regarding subjectivity vis-à-vis discourse, Sanders and Spooren (1997) propose a restriction, namely, that “it only makes sense to call a report subjective if it is bound to a thinking or speaking subject of consciousness” (Sanders and Spooren 1997, p. 85). Later, Pander Maat and Sanders (2000) explain that expressions of epistemic causality are more subjective than semantic ones since they involve “a person, whose intentionality is conceptualized as the ultimate source of the causal event, be it an act of reasoning or some ‘real world’ activity” (Pander Maat and Sanders 2000, p. 64). They propose that the notion of a subject of consciousness (SOC) is needed to account for differences among Dutch causal connectives, which Sweetser’s tripartite “domains of use” approach cannot explain. To illustrate the linguistic encoding of subjectivity, Pander Maat and Sanders use the following sentences (Pander Maat and Sanders 2000, p. 65):

- (22) a. Peter is in Paris.  
b. Peter is probably in Paris.

- c. I think Peter is in Paris.
- d. Peter wants to go to Paris.

In (22a), the participants in the speech event are “entirely external to the semantics of the utterance” (Pander Maat and Sanders 2000, p. 64). However, (22b) and (22c) illustrate *subjectification* whereby “the present speaker accepts responsibility for the propositional content of the utterance, and possibly also for its form” (Pander Maat and Sanders 2000, p. 65, citing Sanders and Spooren 1997). Pander Maat and Sanders add that one’s utterance may also be connected to another SOC besides that of the present speaker, a notion referred to by Sanders and Spooren (1997) as *perspectivization*. They explain that “[n]ormally, perspectivization requires indicators like verbs of cognition, perception and evaluation, such as *want* in [22d],” in which, “Peter is the SOC” (Pander Maat and Sanders 2000, p. 65).

Stukker, Sanders, and Verhagen (2009) observe that subjectivity is often equated with speaker involvement, which they define as “the degree to which the present speaker is involved in the construal of the causal relation” (2009, p. 121). They view a causal relation as subjective if reference to the speaker is needed for its interpretation, and propose that Dutch causal relations be categorized based on their subjective construal of the situation (Stukker et al. 2009, pp. 121–122).<sup>7</sup> Consequently, these authors view both epistemic and speech act relations as subjective on account of the fact that “the speaker functions as the source of the causal relation” (Stukker et al. 2009, pp. 122).

Stukker and Sanders (2012) take a cross-linguistic perspective and examine how Dutch, French, and German “cut up” the domain of causality. They consider those causal relations “*construed* by the speaker or author in ongoing discourse” (Stukker and Sanders 2012, p. 170), including epistemic and speech act causals, to be subjective, and distinguish them from semantic relations, which have “their origin in a different source, and which are merely *reported* by the speaker” (Stukker and Sanders 2012, p. 170, their italics). They adopt the notion of subjectivity as an explanatory concept, noting that this notion is often associated with “speaker involvement,” and cite Langacker (1990), who defines subjectivity “in terms of the relation between the ‘subject of conceptualization’ (in default cases: the speaker who delivers an utterance or a stretch of discourse) and the ‘object of conceptualization’ (what the discourse is about)” (Stukker and Sanders 2012, p. 170). The subject of conceptualization or speaker can establish different relationships with the object, “depending on its degree of involvement in the linguistic construal of ‘what the discourse is about’” (Stukker and Sanders 2012, p. 170). The subject of conceptualization may be the speaker, who can become part of what the discourse is about, and thus the discourse or utterance becomes subjective, particularly when the “meanings [are] grounded in the speaker’s subjective attitude to or a belief about what is said”

<sup>7</sup> For instance, the Dutch causal connective *daardoor* typically marks objective, “nonvolitional” causal processes in “observable reality” (2009, p. 119); *daarom* typically expresses objective “volitional” causality, (e.g., a volitional act like *entering a café* is motivated by a situation presented as the cause, as in “It was extremely cold. *Daarom* we entered a café” (2009, p. 119); and “[*d*] *us* is typically used for marking epistemic causal relations involving a conclusion of the speaker presented as the causal effect” (2009, p. 122).



(Traugott and König 1991, p. 189). By contrast, there may be no speaker involvement, i.e., an utterance can be entirely objective.

According to Stukker and Sanders (2012), the main element that determines whether a causal relation is subjective or not is the “locus of effect, which is the participant or entity around whom/which the causality is centered...If this locus of effect coincides with the speaker or the author, the causal relation is subjective” (2012, p. 170). Nevertheless, Stukker and Sanders note that one problem often cited in analyses of causal connectives is that “connective use cannot always be characterized in a black and white fashion with reference to these categories of objective and subjective causality” (2012, p. 170); and furthermore, connectives may be used in segments that “do not always unambiguously reflect the causal category the connective is typically associated with” (Stukker and Sanders 2012, p. 170).

In summary, although semantic causal relations are considered to be maximally objective and typically characterized by “a minimal amount of speaker involvement” (Sanders and Sweetser 2009, p. 4), pragmatic (epistemic and speech act) relations are inherently subjective and reflect greater speaker involvement. When expressing epistemic causality, the speaker functions as the source of coherence, as his/her knowledge and assumptions from past experience are presented as reasons for reaching a conclusion. We might therefore expect speakers to refer to themselves deictically when expressing this type of causality. Likewise, in speech act relations, because the speaker justifies his/her realization of a speech act, we could also expect deictic first-person references to be common in such cases. Moreover, as suggested earlier, when *porque* relations are pragmatic, it should be possible to calculate the speaker’s intended meaning, by implicature, from the use of *porque* in a particular discourse context, which might be stated in terms of a metapragmatic paraphrase such as *lo digo porque* (‘I’m saying it because’) or *lo he concluido porque* (‘I concluded it because’).

Finally, Spanish *porque*, like English *because*, may be used in both objective content (semantic) and more subjective epistemic and speech act (pragmatic) relations. Therefore, unlike Dutch, in which different causal connectives encode more and less subjective relations, where Spanish *porque* is concerned, speakers may encode greater subjectivity and speaker involvement through other linguistic means. Besides intervening explicitly in the discourse via deictic self-references, such involvement could be conveyed through the speaker’s evaluation of, or expressed attitude or opinion towards the predicated information, or via expressions of (un)certainly toward a statement (see, e.g., Sanders and Spooren 1997). We shall now examine some previous research on Spanish *porque*.

## 4 Spanish *Porque*

Lapesa (1978) cites Andrés Bello’s 1847 edition of the *Gramática de la lengua castellana*, in which the grammarian distinguished two types of causal relations in Spanish. Coincidentally, Bello’s examples with *porque* correspond to Sweetser’s (1990) content and speech act categories. The content relation presents the

effect (“fleeing”) followed by the cause (“being attacked”), whereas in the speech act case, the speaker issues a command and then justifies it (*No digas...porque...* ‘Don’t say...because...’). Lapesa reviews earlier accounts of causal relations provided by Spanish grammars (e.g., by the *Real Academia Española* and Samuel Gili y Gaya) and cites examples involving “el motivo o la premisa” (‘the motive or the premise’) and the consequence, when, in fact, they are epistemic and speech act causal relations. Other examples are described as “cause and effect” relations, which correspond to Sweetser’s content category.

Lapesa analyzes sets of sentences using syntactic tests to identify constraints on Spanish causal connectives. For instance, he demonstrates that sentences such as the following may be inverted (Lapesa 1978, pp. 182–183):<sup>8</sup>

- (23) a. Ha llovido, porque el suelo está mojado.  
‘It has rained, because the ground is wet.’  
b. El suelo está mojado porque ha llovido.  
‘The ground is wet because it has rained.’

(23a) is epistemic: The *porque*-clause explains how the speaker knows that it has rained; by contrast, (23b) is a straightforward semantic case of cause (‘it has rained’) and effect (‘the ground is wet’). These examples support the widely accepted generalization regarding epistemic relations mentioned earlier, namely, that epistemic cases like (23a) involve conclusions deduced from facts presented as evidence, and therefore, they may be *derived from* semantic causal relations such as (23b).

Montolío (2001) identifies *porque* and *como*, *ya que*, *dado que*, and *puesto que* (‘since’) as causal connectives, contrasting them with consecutive connective expressions (‘expresiones conectivas consecutivas’) including *así que* (‘so’), *por tanto* (‘therefore’), *en consecuencia* (‘as a consequence’), and *por eso* (‘that’s why’) (Montolío 2001, pp. 99–101). She explains that while both types of connectives are used in cause–consequence relations, they differ with regard to the part of the relation focalized by the connective. Specifically, causal connectives like *porque* focalize the cause, which is therefore postposed, whereas consecutive connectives like *así que* (‘so that’) focalize and thus postpose the consequence (Montolío 2001, pp. 99–100, translations mine):

- (24) No tengo dinero, *así que* no podré ir al concierto de *Dead can dance*.  
CAUSE CONSEQUENCE  
‘I don’t have the money, so I won’t be able to go to the concert of *Dead Can Dance*.’
- (25) No iré al concierto de *Dead can dance* *porque* no tengo dinero.  
CONSEQUENCE CAUSE  
‘I won’t go to the concert of *Dead Can Dance* because I don’t have the money’

Escandell Vidal (2006) discusses causal relations in Spanish in light of Anscombe and Ducrot’s (1983) argumentation theory, noting that the type of sequence-linkage dubbed “argumentation” involves the act of “adducing arguments in favor

<sup>8</sup> Lapesa (1978) presents epistemic causal relations orthographically with a comma between the clauses suggesting that they are separated by a pause. I address the use of pauses in Spanish *porque* constructions in another study (Blackwell 2013).

of a particular conclusion” (Escandell Vidal 2006, p. 92, my translation). She points out that speakers can use various linguistic strategies to present their utterances as arguments to support or justify a conclusion, and that such linguistic means are used to give the addressee instructions that serve as a guide for interpreting utterances (Escandell Vidal 2006, p. 96). Escandell Vidal refers to these linguistic means as “marcadores argumentativos” (‘argumentative markers’), which include epistemic *porque* (Escandell Vidal 2006, p. 97).<sup>9</sup>

Briz (2001, p. 169) observes that conjunctions can be analyzed at the sentence level as connectors of abstract syntactic units and at the utterance level as expressions that connect speech acts, adding that the function of a pragmatic connective is initially determined by the types of speech it connects and the context. Briz’s “syntactic-propositional” *porque* corresponds to Sweetser’s content category, which he illustrates with example (26), while his “pragmatic” *porque* introduces an argument that justifies the speaker’s previous assertion, as in (27) (Briz 2001, pp. 170–171, translations mine):

(26) Ha ido al médico *porque* está enfermo.  
EFFECT CAUSE  
‘He has gone to the doctor because he’s sick.’

(27) Está enfermo, *porque* ha ido al médico.  
ASSERTION JUSTIFICATION  
‘He’s sick, *because* he has gone to the doctor.’

Briz (2001) also notes that intonation may be a distinguishing factor and suggests that more abruptly falling intonation on *enfermo* is likely to occur before pragmatic *porque* in *Está enfermo, porque ha ido al médico*.<sup>10</sup>

Briz’s “pragmatic” *porque* can also be used to reaffirm a previous statement, as in (28a–b; Briz 2001, p. 171; / appears to indicate a pause; translations mine):

(28) a. Por eso muchas veces los que llaman/*porque* les llaman por teléfono/resulta que se quedan así un pocoooo  
‘That’s why many times the ones who call/*because* they call them on the phone/it turns out that they’re a littllle’

b. A: parece que tó nos venga rodando  
‘it seems that everything is rolling along for us’  
B: si hija desde luego habéis tenido una suerte  
‘yes dear you all sure have had luck’  
C: *porque* ha sido un golpe de suerte  
‘*because* it has been a stroke of luck’

Briz uses syntactic tests to show how pragmatic and semantic *porque* behave differently. Specifically, sentences with semantic *porque* can be negated, questioned, or embedded in a larger context, as the a-utterances in (29)–(31) demonstrate; but,

<sup>9</sup> Essentially, these linguistic means may be viewed as corresponding to Gumperz’s (1989) contextualization cues.

<sup>10</sup> An analysis of the prosodic features of *porque* constructions in the Spanish narratives is beyond the scope of this article, but the relation between Spanish causal constructions and features such as intonation and pauses is an interesting topic for subsequent research.

when *porque* is used pragmatically, these transformations produce illogical sentences, as the b-utterances reveal (Briz 2001, p. 171, translations mine):

- (29) a. No ha ido al médico *porque* está enfermo.  
 ‘He hasn’t gone to the doctor *because* he’s sick.’  
 b. \*No está enfermo, *porque* ha ido al médico.  
 \*‘He’s not sick, *because* he has gone to the doctor.’
- (30) a. ¿Ha ido al médico *porque* está enfermo?  
 ‘Has he gone to the doctor *because* he’s sick?’  
 b. \*¿Está enfermo, *porque* ha ido al médico?  
 \*‘Is he sick, *because* he has gone to the doctor?’
- (31) a. Juan dice que ha ido al médico *porque* está enfermo.  
 ‘Juan says that he has gone to the doctor *because* he’s sick.’  
 b. \*Juan dice que está enfermo, *porque* ha ido al médico.  
 \*‘Juan says that he’s sick, *because* he has gone to the doctor.’

Briz also shows that with semantic *porque*, we can change the order of the clauses, but that this inversion is impossible with pragmatic *porque* (Briz 2001, p. 172):<sup>11</sup>

- (32) a. *Porque* está enfermo ha ido al médico.  
 ‘*Because* he’s sick he’s gone to the doctor.’  
 b. \**Porque* ha ido al médico, está enfermo.  
 \*‘*Because* he’s gone to the doctor, he’s sick.’

Finally, he observes that *porque*, as well as *es que* (lit.: ‘it’s that’), can have double meanings, one semantic, conveying cause, and another pragmatic, in which the speaker provides justification for a conclusion expressed in the preceding utterance (Briz 2001, pp. 172–173, my translations):

- (33) a. No viene a la fiesta/*es que* está enfermo.  
 ‘He’s not coming to the party/*it’s that* he’s sick.’  
 b. Juan no viene a la fiesta *porque* está enfermo.  
 ‘Juan isn’t coming to the party *because* he’s sick.’

Briz’s observation that Spanish *porque* constructions can have two interpretations, one, semantic and another, pragmatic, coincides with Sanders’ (1997) observation for English *because*. He also provides a set of syntactic tests (negation, questioning, embedding, inversion), which may be used to determine whether a causal relation is pragmatic or semantic.

Goethals (2002) provides an in-depth study focusing on the description and classification of Spanish causal conjunctions, including *porque*, *pues* (‘because’), *ya que* and *como* (‘since’). His main objectives are to determine the syntactic constraints on, and paradigmatic characteristics of, these connectives. He shows that *porque* can (i) fall in the scope of negation; (ii) be the focus of a question; (iii) be modified by any type of adverb; (iv) be inserted in a cleft sentence; and (v) introduce an answer to a WH-question. By contrast, the other three causal connectives included in his study can never be used in these contexts. Goethals refers to

<sup>11</sup> The prepositioning of a *porque*-clause in sentences like (32a) is judged to be grammatically unacceptable by some native Spanish speakers.

causal connectives that can occur in these contexts (e.g., *porque*) as *predicative*, and to those that cannot be used under these conditions (e.g., *como*, *ya que*, *pues*) as *explicative* causals. However, he notes that *porque* “has both predicative (porque-P) and explicative (porque-E) uses, similarly to English *because*, French *parce que* or German *weil*” (Goethals 2002, p. xiv). Goethals’ findings regarding the differences between *porque* and the other Spanish causal connectives he analyzes point to the fact that *porque* is used in a wider range of contexts than other Spanish causal connectives.<sup>12</sup>

## 5 Methodology: Data Collection, Participants, and Transcription

The narratives analyzed for the present study were elicited using *The pear film*, a 6-minute film with a soundtrack but no dialogue depicting “a set of events... with a set of people and objects that participated in the events in various ways...” (Chafe 1980, p. xii).<sup>13</sup> The narratives were recorded in Maleján, a rural town of approximately 350 people 40 miles northwest of Zaragoza in northeastern Spain. The film was shown to thirty Spaniards from this region in groups of between three and five people at a time. Each group watched the film twice through, and a narrative of approximately 3–5 minute in length was elicited from each speaker individually shortly afterward. Before viewing the film, participants were told that they would watch a short film twice and then be asked to talk about it, and that their speech would be videotaped. They were assured that there was no right or wrong way to talk about the film and that they would be telling another person (“L” for “listener” in the transcript), who had not seen the film before, what happened in the film. The listener, a 36-year-old Spanish male and acquaintance, friend, or family member of all of the narrators, used an initial prompt such as *Cuéntame la película* (literally, ‘Tell me the film’) to elicit each narrative and then interacted conversationally with the participants, making occasional requests for clarification, as they retold the film. As the investigator, I was present during the recording of all the narratives and interacted occasionally with the participants.<sup>14</sup>

The narratives were video recorded and later transcribed using Spanish orthography and transcription conventions from Levinson (1983, pp. 369–370), based on the conversation analysis work of Gail Jefferson, Harvey Sacks, and others.<sup>15</sup> Each

<sup>12</sup> There were far fewer tokens of the other causal connectives in the Spanish pear film narratives. When the first twenty narratives were searched, eight instances of causal *como* (‘since’), three of consecutive *así que* (‘so’), three of *por eso* (‘that’s why’), two of *pues* (‘because’), and one instance each of the phrase *por lo que* (‘that’s why’) and *que* (used causally like *porque*) were found (i.e., only 18 non-*porque* causal connectives were found in the first twenty narratives).

<sup>13</sup> See the Appendix for a summary of *the pear film* (Chafe 1980).

<sup>14</sup> My turns are labeled “I” in the transcript.

<sup>15</sup> See the Appendix for the transcription conventions used.

narrator was assigned a number corresponding to the order in which the 30 narratives were produced (e.g., “speaker 1” is “S1,” “speaker 2” is “S2,” and so on). The participants’ ages ranged from 16 to 75: seven were between 16 and 25 years old; seven were between 26 and 35; five were between 36 and 45; seven were between 46 and 55; and four were between 66 and 75 years of age.<sup>16</sup> Nine had attended only elementary school, eleven had three to four years of high school, one had a degree from a vocational school, two had university degrees, and the remaining seven were high school or university students. Of the 23 nonstudents, only three held white-collar jobs, and five of the seven students had at least one parent in a white-collar profession. Finally, 24 of the 30 participants were women.<sup>17</sup>

## 6 Data Analysis and Results

Firstly, the narratives were searched electronically to identify all instances of *porque*, and a total of 134 tokens were found. Seven of these were eliminated due to being repetitions of *porque* or false starts requiring reformulation of a *porque*-clause. Subsequently, to ascertain whether tokens were used in content, epistemic, or speech act relations, Sanders’ (1997) Basic Operation Paraphrase Test was applied (see (12)–(16) above). For example, in (34), produced by S1, a female participant between 66 and 75 years old (henceforward, F, 66–75), the segments connected by *porque* (indicated in (34) in italics) were first isolated and then reworded to capture the gist of the causal relation and create paraphrases (repeated from (20)):

- (34) S1: ...y: y he visto me ha parecido de pronto que era como algu: no d’estos que se querían llevar las peras, como un ladronzuelo. Pero después yo he pensado que no. *Que debía de ser el amo de la finca, porque había otro señor que pasaba con una cabra, y: y he visto que no había pues un grito de decirle ¿y usted qué hace allí? Digo este señor será el amo.*  
 “...a:nd and I saw it seemed to me suddenly that it was like one of these [guys] who wanted to take the pears, like a little thief. But later I thought no [he wasn’t]. *That he must have been the owner of the farm, because there was another man who passed by with a goat,* a:nd and I saw that there wasn’t well a shout to say to him, and you what are you doing there? I say [i.e. thought to myself] this man is probably the owner.”

Application of Sanders’ type-(i) paraphrase for pragmatic causal relations reveals that the *porque* relation is pragmatic, and specifically, epistemic (#indicates that a paraphrase test renders pragmatically infelicitous relation):

<sup>16</sup> With the exception of those aged 25 and under, who gave their specific ages, participants checked one of the following age categories in the demographic questionnaire: 26–35, 36–45, 46–55, 56–65, and 66–75.

<sup>17</sup> The sex, age, and level of education of the speakers were not examined as factors influencing the use of *porque* relations in the film narratives. Although these variables could potentially influence the expression of causality in narrative discourse, the limited number of speakers and tokens of *porque* in the data ( $N=127$ ) would likely render attempts to quantify the effects of such sociolinguistic variables on causal expression statistically insignificant.

- (35) (i) The fact that there was another man who passed by with a goat and didn't say anything causes S1's claim/conclusion that the man picking pears must have been the owner of the farm.
- (ii) #The fact that there was another man who passed by with a goat and didn't say anything causes the fact that the man picking pears must have been the owner of the farm.

In (34), S1 uses *porque* to introduce evidence supporting her conclusion that the man picking pears must have been the owner of the farm, and the acceptability of the epistemic paraphrase in (35i) readily confirms the relation as epistemic.

Although Sanders' paraphrase tests were useful in identifying the domain of causal relations with *porque*, they were also at times somewhat difficult to apply due to the need to isolate and reconstruct each relation using *The fact that...* The paraphrase insertion tests proposed to illustrate speakers' metapragmatic reflection, while providing evidence of a Gricean implicature (following Reyes 2002; see Sect. 3.1), were also applied to test the *porque* relations for causal domain. These paraphrases include *y lo digo* ('and I'm saying it') for speech act causals, and *y lo he concluido* ('and I concluded it') for strictly epistemic cases (see, e.g., (19)–(21) above). In (36) (extracted from example (34)), we see that insertion of either of the two paraphrases before *porque* (in curly brackets and italics) is acceptable, illustrating that S1 uses *porque* not only to introduce justification for her previous statement (i.e., her speech act) but also to provide evidence in support of it as an epistemic conclusion. This observation suggests that use of an epistemic *porque* relation simultaneously involves (i.e., entails) the speaker's metapragmatic reflection on, and justification of, *both* the epistemic conclusion reached and its being uttered in the previous clause, that is, justification for realizing the preceding utterance or speech act:

- (36) S1: ...Que debía de ser el amo de la finca, {*y lo digo/y lo he concluido*} *porque* había otro señor que pasaba con una cabra...  
 '...That he must have been the owner of the farm, {*and I'm saying it/and I concluded it*} *because* there was another man who passed by with a goat....'

Additionally, the discourse contexts in which *porque* relations occurred were analyzed so as to identify indicators of subjectivity, since it was hypothesized that pragmatic (epistemic and speech act) causal relations would be characterized by subjectivity markers, including evidence of the speaker as the SOC. For instance, in (34) the speaker foregrounds herself as the SOC who is responsible for, and in fact the originator of, the causal relation. This is conveyed linguistically by her deictic, first-person references coupled with verbs of perception and cognition (e.g., *ver* 'see', *parecer* 'seem', *pensar* 'think', *decir* 'say', i.e., think to myself), which are in italics in (37) (taken from (34)):

- (37) S1: ...y: *y he visto me ha parecido*... Pero después *yo he pensado* que no...y: *y he visto* que... *Digo* este señor será el amo.  
 "...and and *I saw it seemed to me*... But later *I thought* no [he wasn't]...and and *I saw* that... *I say* [i.e. think to myself] this man is probably the owner."

These overt subjectivity indicators, along with the expression of probability with the Spanish future tense (*este señor será*... "This man is probably..."), reveal that the speaker is indeed the SOC and source of the epistemic causal relation, play-

ing the role of “concluder”. In the following sections, representative expressions of causality with *porque* from the narratives are analyzed in terms of paraphrase tests, subjectivity indicators, and other discourse factors in order to determine and characterize relation type.

### 6.1 *Semantic Causal Relations in the Spanish Narratives*

Of the 127 *porque* relations, 26 (20%) were judged to be strictly semantic, while, 27 (21%), allowed either a semantic or an epistemic interpretation (see Sect. 6.3 for the analysis of these cases). The relations were ascertained through application of Sanders’ (1997) and Goethals’ (2010) paraphrase tests and insertion of the metapragmatic phrases *y lo digo* (‘and I’m saying it’) and *y lo he concluido* (‘and I concluded it’) before each *porque* clause.

While *The pear film* contains numerous sequential events that lend themselves to interpretations of cause and effect, it does not *explicitly* show why things happen (with the exception of the boy’s bike running over a rock causing him to fall and the pears to spill to the ground). As a result, the narrators’ expressions of semantic causality are largely reports of probable causes for events in the film. Of the thirty narrators, only four speakers used more semantic causal relations than pragmatic ones: S3 (F, 66–75) tells the listener what she “imagined” happened in the film, incorporating three strictly semantic *porque* relations, and two allowing either a semantic or epistemic interpretation; S6 (F, 16) uses seven causal constructions, five of which are strictly semantic; S10 (F, 26–35) uses seven semantic causal constructions and one pragmatic one; and S12 (M, 21) expresses semantic causality in six out of nine causal relations.

At times the speakers inferred causal relations that were never made evident in the film but instead were based on stereotypical assumptions. For instance, because the boy on the bike was a “man”, naturally, he looked at the girl; and, because he was focusing his attention on her, he did not see the rock, which caused him to have an accident. However, the strictly semantic relations appear to have one factor in common: they involve *observable* or *potentially observable* events and situations. For instance, S3 (F, 66–75) explains why the man picking pears in the tree does not realize that one of his baskets of pears has been stolen. The infelicitous insertion of the metapragmatic phrases before *porque* (in brackets and italics) helps confirm that this relation is semantic:

- (38) S3: A todo esto el señor no se da cuenta {#y lo digo/#y lo he concluido} *porque* el chico ya procura de que no lo vea.  
 ‘What’s more the man doesn’t realize {#and I’m saying it/#and I’ve concluded it} because the boy then makes sure that he doesn’t see him.’

Sanders’ paraphrase test also reveals that this relation is indeed semantic and not pragmatic: The fact that the boy makes sure that the man does not see him causes the fact that/#causes my claim/#causes my conclusion that the man does not realize [what has happened].

Some semantic relations involved actions that the narrators reported, which were never actually depicted in the film, as in the following case. Again, insertion of



the metapragmatic phrases (in brackets and italics) is infelicitous, thus ruling out a pragmatic interpretation:

- (39) S3: Entonces e:h e- los otros se van muy tranquilos con sus peras se van comiéndose-las, y: y pasan por delante de: del señor este, a: apartan la piedra que hay en el camino, {#y lo digo/#y lo he concluido} *porque* el chico ha tropezao en aquella. Se la quitan.  
 ‘So u:h uh- the others leave very calmly with their pears they walk away eating them, a:nd and they pass in front o:f of this man, they m: move the rock that’s there in the road to the side, {#and I’m saying it/#and I’ve concluded it} *because* the boy ran over that. They take it away.’

Here, S3 reports that a member of the group of boys who appear in the film removes a rock in the road because the boy carrying the basket of pears on his bike had run over it causing him to have an accident. The act of removing a potentially hazardous object because it caused an accident is a stereotypical relation of cause and *potential* consequence. Similarly, in (40), S3 creates a probable cause–consequence relation to explain why the pearpicker is looking at his baskets at the end of the film, although her reason is presented as constructed dialogue in which she adopts the voice of the pearpicker and conveys his thoughts using the first person. Notwithstanding, insertion of both metapragmatic phrases before *porque* is infelicitous, thus supporting a semantic interpretation:

- (40) S3: ...Y cuando: ellos se van por debajo del: del peral, se pasan debajo d'allí y el señor que se bajó del del peral y se está mirando los los cestos {#y lo digo/#y lo he concluido} *porque* dice, pues si yo aquí tenía más y me falta uno. Está allí mirandolós, me falta uno. ((investigator laughs))  
 ‘...And when: they go by the: the pear tree, they pass beneath there and the man who climbed down from from the pear tree and is looking at the the baskets {#and I’m saying it/#and I concluded it} *because* he says [i.e. thinks to himself], well but I had more here and I’m missing one. He’s there looking at them, I’m missing one.’

Sanders’ (1997) paraphrase test for semantic relations in (41a), although awkward to apply, also upholds a semantic interpretation, while Goethals’ semantic paraphrase in (41b) further confirms this reading:

- (41) a. The fact that the man says [i.e. thinks to himself], well but I had more here and I’m missing one causes the fact that he is looking at the baskets.  
 b. The reason why he is looking at the basket is that he’s saying [i.e. thinking to himself] that he’s missing one.

Nevertheless, the causal relation in (40) is subjective in that the speaker is responsible for creating the relation between the man’s looking at his baskets and what she imagines he is saying or thinking to himself, based on her knowledge of the previous events in the film. In constructing a dialogue to convey the pearpicker’s thoughts, S3 contributes to the storyline by providing an obvious reason for why he is looking at his baskets of pears in the final scene of the film.

S4 (F, 66–75) offers a stereotypical explanation for the boy’s bike accident:

- (42) S4: ...((laughs)), que luego pues, iba por allí que se le caía una que se le caía otra que al final se ha tropezao {#y lo digo/#y lo he concluido} *porque* al quitarle, algo que le ha pasado al sombrero,  
 L: ¿Qué le, qué le ha pasado?  
 S4: Ha pasado otra chica con otra bicicleta, y le ha quitao el sombrero.

'S4: ...((laughs)), that later well, he was going along there and was dropping one here and one there so finally he crashed {#and I'm saying it/#and I've concluded it} because upon taking [it] from him, something happened to his hat,

L: What h- what happened to him?

S4: Another girl went by on another bicycle, and she took his hat off of him.'

S4 attributes the boy's accident to a probable cause involving an inference guided by a somewhat stereotypical assumption, namely, a girl riding by in the opposite direction took the boy's hat from him, causing him to fall off his bike, when in fact, the hat simply flies off when the boy turns his head to look at the girl, and he runs over a rock causing him to fall. S4's causal relation may be paraphrased semantically as "The reason why the boy fell off his bike was that a girl passed by him on a bike and took his hat," and one must therefore infer that this distraction caused the accident. Such attributions of causality involve probable causes of events based on stereotypical bridging inferences. In this case, the fact that the boy passes a girl, who is also on a bike, and then his hat flies off, leads S4 to suppose a causal stereotypical link between the events: boy meets girl, girl distracts boy by taking his hat (perhaps to flirt with or tease him), causing him to have an accident.

Strictly semantic relations in the film narratives also involved readily observable actions or states, as in (43):

- (43) S6: ...Y mientras el señor que está en el árbol pues sigue recogiendo peras, y baja para: para echarlas al cesto {#y lo digo/#y lo he concluido} porque lleva un man- un un delantal y ya las llevaba llenas [sic].

'...And while the man who is in the tree well he continues picking pears, and he climbs down to: to toss them into the basket {#and I'm saying it/#and I've concluded it} because he's wearing a man- an apron and he had them full.'

Here, S6 (F, 16) gives a reason why the pearpicker climbs down the tree to toss the pears into the basket: He was wearing an apron (with pockets) that was full (of pears). In other words, semantic causality is based on an observable action and situation, which may be paraphrased as: The fact that the man's apron pockets were full of pears caused the fact that he climbed down to empty them into the basket.

Although strictly semantic *porque* relations described situations either depicted in the film or inferable from the events that took place, at times, the narrators presented them subjectively, reflecting the fact that they were retelling a film as they recalled it, while participating in an experimental task, which also led them to draw assumptions regarding probable causes. This is reflected in S7's (F, 18) prefacing of a semantic causal relation with the epistemic phrase *yo creo que* ('I think that,' underlined below); however, the discourse context does not allow for felicitous insertion of the metapragmatic phrases:

- (44) S7: ...Sí entonces se le cae una y: recoge las que tenía él guardadas, y la que se le ha caído, primero la limpia, y la la echa otra vez. Entonces si: si estaba- yo creo que la ha limpiado {#y lo digo/#y lo he concluido} pues *porque* estaba un poco: sucia pero si hubiera sido s- el amo pues, le daría lo mismo tirarla ¿no? pero, como era el trabaja- el trabajador y eso...

'...Yes then he drops one and he picks up the ones that he had gathered, and the one that he dropped, first he cleans it, and he tosses it in again. So if if he was- I think that he cleaned it {#and I'm saying it/#and I've concluded it} well because it was a

little: dirty but if he had been b- the owner [i.e. of the farm or orchard], he would have just as easily thrown it away, right? but since he was the work- the worker [i.e. the hired hand] and all...'

This *porque* relation may be easily paraphrased to illustrate a semantic consequence–cause relation: The fact that the pear was a little dirty caused the fact that he [the pearpicker] cleaned it. By contrast, a speech act or an epistemic paraphrase proves to be infelicitous in this case: #The fact that the pear was dirty causes my claim/my conclusion that that he cleaned it. Yet, the speaker construes this semantic causal relation by *conjecturing* about the most probable reason for cleaning—because it was dirty. As such, there is speaker *involvement* in construing this semantic causal relation, which in turn triggers additional inferences in the way of culturally based stereotypical assumptions: The man cleaned the pear not only because it was dirty but also, as S7 reasons in the subsequent discourse, because he was ‘the worker’ (*el trabajador*), and he would not have cleaned it if he had been the owner of the farm. In other words, while the local semantic *porque* relation is semantic in nature, it is not “merely reported by the speaker” (which is traditionally associated with semantic relations), but “construed by the speaker...in ongoing discourse” (Stukker and Sanders 2012, p. 170), a characteristic traditionally associated with epistemic and speech act causals.

The semantic relations of consequence–cause in the film narratives, although often inferred based on stereotypical assumptions, were sometimes based on potentially observable characteristics (whether they were actually shown in the film or not). For instance, S12 (M, 21) states that the boy puts his bike down carefully because it was hard for him to put it down, and that it was hard to put down on account of the fact that he was little. Insertion of the metapragmatic phrases is infelicitous in the first *porque* relation, and seems more acceptable in the second case:

- (45) S12: ...deja la bicicleta con mucho cuidao, {#y lo digo/#y lo he concluido} porque le cuesta: le cuesta dejarla {y lo digo/y lo he concluido} porque el niño//  
L://Es pequeño.  
S12: es demasiado pequeño para la bicicleta.  
'S12: ...he puts the bicycle down very carefully, {#and I'm saying it/#and I've concluded it} because it's hard for him it's hard for him to put it down {and I'm saying it/and I've concluded it} because the boy//  
L://Is little."  
S12: is too little for the bicycle.'

The semantic (a-a')-paraphrases are possible for both *porque* relations in this excerpt, but an epistemic (b)-paraphrase is unacceptable for the first *porque* relation, while the second *porque* relation lends itself more easily to the epistemic (b')-paraphrase:

- (46) a. The fact that it's difficult for him to put the bike down causes the fact that he puts it down carefully.  
a'. The fact that boy is little causes the fact that it's hard for him to put the bike down.  
b. #The fact that it's difficult for the boy to put the bike down causes my conclusion that he puts the bike down carefully.  
b'. The fact that the boy is little causes my conclusion that it's hard for him to put it down.

How can we account for the fact that the second instance of *porque* in (45) lends itself more easily to either a semantic or an epistemic interpretation? The explanation may lie in the fact that it is easier to observe careful actions, e.g., laying a bike down slowly and carefully, than it is to observe the difficulty another person experiences when performing a task, since one cannot know for certain how someone feels. The distinction between physical actions and psychological states may account for differences between strictly semantic readings for causal relations and those allowing for either a semantic or a pragmatic (epistemic or speech act) interpretation.

## 6.2 *Epistemic and Speech Act Causal Relations in the Spanish Narratives*

A total of 57 (45%) of the 127 *porque* relations in the film narratives were epistemic. This was by far the most frequently occurring type of causal relation in the data set, particularly if we add to this group the 27 *porque* relations (21% of the total cases), which, based on the heuristic tests, could have either semantic or epistemic readings. By contrast, speech act relations were by far the most infrequently occurring type of causal relation in the narratives, with only 12 (approximately 9.5%) of the 127 cases determined to be strictly speech act cases. As noted earlier, in speech act expressions of causality speakers provide justification for having performed the speech act expressed in their previous utterance by giving the motivation behind, for instance, asking a question, giving an order, making a request, etc. By contrast, in using epistemic relations, speakers provide arguments that reveal their reasoning for reaching certain conclusions. However, because both epistemic and speech act relations involve the speaker's beliefs, arguments, and/or motives, the speaker's perspective plays an important role in both of these relations; therefore, both are likely to be accompanied by indicators of the speaker's perspective, including self-references and "verbs of cognition, perception and evaluation" (Pander Maat and Sanders 2000, p. 65). This is the case in the following stretch of discourse, in which S1 (F, 66–75) is prompted by the listener (L) when she cannot remember how the film continued but then proceeds to evaluate the actions of the pearpicker. The metapragmatic phrases are inserted before both instances of *porque* in (47) to test for causal domain:

(47) S1: Y: (.) no recuerdo cómo ha continuao. (.)

L: ¿Al final qué pasa se van, se van cada uno por su lado y no pasa=

S1: =Sí sí.

L: ¿El hombre que está en el árbol no se da cuenta// de que le quitan las peras?

S1: El árbol, el hombre que está en el árbol baja, se le ve muy meticoloso, *que* las mira, *que* las pone, las coge con un poco de brusquedad {*y lo digo/y lo he concluido*} *porque*, las peras de agua, hay que cogerlas con cabo, {*y lo digo/#y lo he concluido*} *porque* si no si se tira a lo mejor por el orificio que hace el cabo puede podrirse que se dice. Pero bueno, el hombre se veía que disfrutaba cogiendo su fruto.

'S1: A:nd (.) I don't remember how it continued. (.)

L: In the end what happens? Do they leave, do they leave, each one in his own direction and nothing happens=

S1: =Yeah yeah.

L: Doesn't the man who is in the tree realize// that they are taking the pears from him?

S1: The tree, the man who is in the tree climbs down, you can see he's very meticulous, and he looks at them, and he puts them, he picks them a little bit abruptly {and I'm saying it/and I've concluded it} because, dessert pears, you have to pick them with the stem, {and I'm saying it/#and I've concluded it} because otherwise, if you pull, it [i.e. the pear] can rot because of the hole that the stem makes so they say. But anyway, the man you could see that he was enjoying picking his fruit.'

First, S1 evaluates the man's pear picking, stating that one can see he is very "meticulous". Then she justifies her evaluation by giving reasons to support it: *que las mira* ('and he looks at them'), *que las pone* ('and he puts them'). Instead of using the prototypical connective *porque*, she introduces her reasons for thinking (and stating) that he was meticulous with the conjunction *que* (lit. 'that').<sup>18</sup> The relation may be paraphrased as: The fact that the man looked at the pears and put them down causes S1's claim that one could see he was meticulous. Subsequently, she evaluates the way the man in the film picks the pears (*con un poco de brusquedad*, 'roughly', lit. 'with a little roughness'), which is followed up by her justification for why she concluded (and thus states) that the man's actions were a little rough: *porque las peras de agua, hay que cogerlas con cabo* ('because, dessert pears, you have to pick them with the stem'). One must infer the epistemic relation of causality from the utterance in the context, since a paraphrase using the propositions uttered does not convey the entire picture. In other words, the paraphrase, 'the reason why S1 thinks the man was picking the pears too roughly is because one has to pick them with the stem', doesn't result in a coherent relation of causality without the additional inference that the man was, as S1 implies by her evaluation of the man's actions, *not* picking the pears with the stem on, due to the fact that he was picking them so 'roughly.' Immediately after this epistemic causal construction, S1 adds another *porque*-clause that serves as advice on how to pick pears correctly. Both Sanders' (1997) and Goethals' (2010) paraphrase tests for pragmatic speech act causals pass muster in this case: The fact that a pear can rot if picked without the stem causes S1's *advice* that you have (i.e., one has) to pick them with the stem; and, the reason I'm telling you to (i.e., I recommend that you) pick pears with the stem on them is that if you don't...they can rot. This in turn explains why insertion of the metapragmatic epistemic phrase *y lo he concluido* ('and I've concluded it') is unacceptable after S1's instruction on how to pick pears correctly, whereas insertion of the metapragmatic speech act phrase *y lo digo* ('and I'm saying it') is perfectly felicitous.

S4 (F, 66–75) explains why it 'pained her' to see the man picking pears so roughly:

- (48) S4: ...y han vuelto por donde el mismo, estaba el señor de las peras, dando sus tirones al peral que a mí me hacía duelo *porque* al peral hay que tratarlo como unas, las plantas hay que tratarlas como los animales y como las personas, con un poco más de delicadeza. Que me perdone el *protagonista*.

<sup>18</sup> The conjunction *que* is translated here as 'and' but could easily be translated as '(be)cause,' as *que* introduces the speaker's justification for stating that the man was meticulous.

‘...and they returned past where the same [guy], the pear man was there, giving his yanks on the pear tree and it pained me *because* you have to treat the pear tree like some, plants you have to treat like animals and like people, with a little bit of tenderness. [I hope] that the protagonist forgives me.’

Here, the narrator makes explicit reference to herself (...*a mí me hacía duelo porque*... ‘...it pained me because...’), thus intervening in the narrative to express how she felt while watching the film. To test for epistemic causality using Sanders’ (1997) paraphrase test, it is necessary to add information, which S4 implicitly conveys in the discourse, expressed in the following paraphrase in brackets. However, the resulting utterance is infelicitous or questionable at best: The fact that you have to treat the pear tree like animals and people [and the man did not do this given the fact that he was yanking the pears from the tree] causes S1’s conclusion that the man’s actions made her sad/pained her. Using Goethals’ (2010) epistemic paraphrase, the result is not much more convincing: The reason why I think/concluded that it made me sad is that... The epistemic paraphrases are infelicitous due to the fact that the utterance *me hacía duelo* (‘it pained me’ or ‘it made me sad’) is not a *conclusion* reached through inference, but rather a psychological *reaction* to the events portrayed in the movie, which the speaker then justifies with a *porque* utterance. In such contexts, Goethals’ speech act paraphrase (*The reason I say this is that...*) and felicitous insertion of the metapragmatic phrase, *y lo digo porque* (‘and I’m saying it’) reveal that this causal relation is best classified as a speech act causal, involving the speaker’s justification of her evaluative stance, which may be paraphrased as: The reason I’m saying that the man’s yanking the pears from the tree made me sad is that...

In the following excerpt, S7 (F, 18) refers to the man picking pears as a ‘farmhand’ (*un peón*) and goes on to explain her reasons for concluding that this was his occupation, and that therefore, the pears he was picking were not his. Insertion of both metapragmatic phrases before *porque* is possible, reflecting the fact that the speaker is both justifying her conclusion and reflecting on and justifying her preceding statement:

(49) S7: ...Entonces está un un peón {*y lo digo/y lo he concluido*} *porque* se se ve- yo creo que se ve claramente que no son tuyas las m- las peras. Que es un trabajador que: está allí haciendo la jornada, está cogiendo peras, y se le cae una. Entonces he deducido que no eran tuyas *porque* ha limpiado mucho la pera esa que se le había caído, y: la ha dejado en un cesto.

L: Estaba cogiendo peras de un árbol.

S7: Sí entonces se le cae una y: recoge las que tenía él guardadas, y la que se le ha caído, primero la limpia, y la echa otra vez. Entonces sí: si estaba yo creo que la ha limpiado, pues *porque* estaba un poco: sucia pero si hubiera sido s- el amo pues, le daría lo mismo tirarla ¿no? pero, *como* era el trabaja- el trabajador y eso

L: Se lo toma muy, muy en serio.

S7: Sí. Yo creo que: que no era suyo el campo.

‘S7: ...Then a farmhand is there {*and I’m saying it/and I’ve concluded it*} *because* you you see- I think that you see clearly that the m- the pears aren’t his. That he’s a worker who: is there doing his shift, he’s picking pears, and he drops one. Then I deduced that they weren’t his *because* of how much he cleaned that pear that he had dropped, and he put it in a basket.

L: He was he was picking pears from a tree.

S7: Yes then he drops one and he gathers the ones that he had tucked away, and the one that he dropped, first he cleans it, and he tosses it it back in. Then if he was I think that he cleaned it, well *because* it was a little dirty but if he had been the owner well, it wouldn't have mattered to him to throw it out, right? but, *since* he was the work- the worker and all

L: He takes it very, very seriously.

S7: Yeah. I think that that the land wasn't his.'

S7 first expresses epistemic causality by explaining why she calls the pearpicker a farmhand. The paraphrase tests reveal this reading: The fact that you see (i.e., one sees) clearly that the pears are not his causes S7's *conclusion* that he is a farmhand; and, the reason why S7 thinks he is a farmhand is that you see (i.e., one sees) clearly that the pears are not his. By contrast, the paraphrases used for semantic readings result in infelicitous utterances: #The fact that you see clearly that the pears aren't his causes the fact that he is a farmhand; and, #the reason why he is a farmhand is that you see clearly that the pears aren't his.

The paraphrase tests determine equally well the type of relation involved in the second *porque* construction in L7's first turn in (49). For instance, the fact that the man 'cleaned the pear a lot' (*ha limpiado mucho la pera*) does not *cause* the fact that 'the pears weren't his' but rather gives way to S7's *conclusion* (or inference) that the pears did not belong to the man. In addition, S7 states explicitly with a first-person marked verb of cognition (*he deducido* 'I deduced') that she inferred this based on the man's actions. In her second turn in (49), S7 expresses semantic causality (see also example (44) above): The reason why the man cleaned the pear is that it was a little dirty. However, this relation is introduced by, and thus framed as, a belief statement: *yo creo que la ha limpiado, pues porque...* 'I think that he cleaned it, well because...' While the causal relation passes the semantic paraphrase test when we consider only the minimal clauses joined by *porque*, the speaker frames her utterance as an inference-based conclusion using a verb of cognition (*creo* 'I think'), suggesting that the relation may be epistemic and revealing that the speaker is simply attributing a stereotypical (i.e., most probable) reason for why the man cleaned the pear in the film. However, to pass an epistemic paraphrase test, we must add information that is not explicitly expressed, but which may be inferred from the discourse context: The reason why S7 thinks the man *felt obligated* to clean the pear is because it was dirty. This relation of causality is only clear if we analyze the subsequent discourse, where S7 wraps up her explanation by reiterating her inference and the reasoning behind it; that is, if the man had been the owner...cleaning the pear would not have mattered to him (i.e., he would have just tossed the dirty pear in the basket). As Pander Maat and Sanders (2000) note, the expression of epistemic causality is more subjective than that of semantic causality, on account of involving "a person, whose intentionality is conceptualized as the ultimate source of the causal event, be it an act of reasoning or some 'real world' activity" (Pander Maat and Sanders 2000, p. 64). S7 uses both *porque* relations in her first turn in (49) to explain her reasoning, rendering them epistemic, while her third *porque* construction in the excerpt (in L7's second turn) passes both semantic paraphrase tests when the larger discourse context is not considered.

In (50), S3 (F, 66–75) expresses causality with a *porque*-clause to justify her response to the investigator's (I's) question, posed toward the end of her narrative:

- (50) I: ¿Hay algún comentario que quieres hacer sobre la película o?:  
 S3: Pues mm no sé. No sé si hay mm más comentario.  
 I: No eso es todo.  
 S3: *Porque* eso es todo y *como* ellos no hablan nada, pues yo es lo que me imagino, que la el hombre se ha quedado un poco sorprendido *porque* ha visto que, que allí le faltaba un cesto.  
 I: Do you want to comment on anything else about the film?  
 S3: Well uhh I don't know. I don't know if there is uhh anything else to comment on.  
 I: No that's all.  
 S3: *Because* that's all and since they don't speak at all, well I it's what I imagine, that the the man ended up being a little surprised *because* he saw that, that there he was missing a basket...'

S3 first responds to I's question saying *No sé si hay mm más comentario* ('I don't know if uhh there's more to comment on') but then repeats I's interjection in a *porque* clause: *Porque eso es todo* ('Because that's all', i.e., that's the end of the film). This causal utterance serves as an argument to support her previous response. Application of the paraphrase tests reveals that the semantic (a) and epistemic (b)-paraphrases are questionable at best, while the speech act (c)-paraphrases are the most convincing:

- (51) a. ?The reason why I don't know if there is more to comment on is because that's all.  
 a'. ?The fact that that's all causes the fact that S7 doesn't know if there is more to comment on.  
 b. ?The reason why I think I don't know if there is more to comment on is because that's all.  
 b'. ?The fact that that's all causes S7's conclusion that she doesn't know if there's more to comment on.  
 c. The reason why I say I don't know if there is more to comment on is because that's all.  
 c'. The fact that that's all causes S7's claim/reply that she doesn't know if there is more to comment on.

The greater acceptability of the speech act paraphrases may be because S3's *porque* utterance is used to justify and support her *answer* to I's question, that is, her speech act. It is also clearly metapragmatic, as S3 both explains her response and reflects on her previous discourse, using discourse deictic *eso* ('that', i.e., what I've said) to refer to her narrative as a whole. This reflective statement is followed by another causal construction, *y como ellos no hablan nada, pues yo es lo que me imagino* ('and since they don't speak at all, well it's what I imagine'), a clearly metapragmatic utterance involving the justificational causal connective *como* ('since'), for which an epistemic paraphrase seems infelicitous because no inference is involved, but a speech act paraphrase works fine:

- (52) Epistemic: #The fact that they don't speak at all causes S7's *conclusion* that it [i.e. what she says in her narrative] is what she imagines.  
 Speech Act: The fact that they don't speak at all causes S7's *claim* that it [what she says in her narrative] is what she imagines.



In other words, the reason why S3 *says* that her narrative is what she imagines is because there is no speech to rely on in order to get the gist of the story. This expression of causality is markedly metapragmatic in that S3 refers discourse deictically to her previous narration and sums it up saying, *es lo que me imagino* ('it [i.e., my rendition of the story] is what I imagine').

The second *porque* construction in (50) (copied in (53) below) allows insertion of both metapragmatic phrases, suggesting that it is a pragmatic relation involving the speaker's justification for a *conclusion* based on knowledge of the events in the film, as well as justification for making the preceding statement, i.e., for realizing the speech act:

- (53) S3: ...que la el hombre se ha quedado un poco sorprendido {*y lo digo/y lo he concluido*} *porque* ha visto que, que allí le faltaba un cesto...  
 '...that the the man ended up being a little surprised {*and I'm saying it/and I've concluded it*} *because* he saw that, that there he was missing a basket...'

However, one could also construe this relation as a semantic one whereby the cause of the man's psychological reaction (i.e., his being "surprised") was his seeing and thus discovering that one of his baskets of pears was missing. The possibility of *porque* relations having two potential readings, one semantic and another pragmatic, is taken up in the next section.

### 6.3 Causal Relations with Two Potential Readings in the Spanish Narratives

Out of the 127 expressions of causality with *porque*, 27 (or approximately 21%) of them could be interpreted as either semantic or epistemic relations. These relations permitted the felicitous insertion of both metapragmatic phrases, *y lo digo* ('and I'm saying it') and *y lo he concluido* ('I concluded it'), or a similar epistemic phrase such as *y lo pienso* (lit. 'and I think it') immediately before the *porque*-clause. Additionally, in these cases, there was a clear real-world link between the reasons or causes expressed and their respective consequences or conclusions. By contrast, only five *porque* relations (4% of the relations analyzed) were deemed to allow either a semantic or a speech act-pragmatic interpretation. These constructions passed the semantic and speech act paraphrase tests and also allowed for felicitous insertion of the phrase *y lo digo* ('and I'm saying it'), whereas insertion of the epistemic phrase *y lo he concluido* ('and I concluded it') was infelicitous, showing that the *porque*-clauses provided justification for the previous utterance, which could not be interpreted as an argument or evidence to support a conclusion or inference.

The potential for two readings, one semantic and another pragmatic, seems to stem from the greater objectivity involved in the causal relations; that is, causal constructions having two possible interpretations appear to involve noncontroversial or stereotypical relations of causality involving causes that are either physically visible in the film or logical semantic links between causes and consequences or conclusions. For instance, both a semantic and a pragmatic (epistemic) reading are possible for the *porque* relation in (54):

- (54) S1: ...Y al volver la cabeza a mirarla, ha tropezado en una piedra que no veía, y las peras se han ido al suelo. Eso ha sido graciosísimo, *porque* digo tan pequeño, y cómo se va a ver a la chica. Me ha hecho mucha gracia.  
 ‘...And when turning his head to look at her, he ran over a rock that he didn’t see, and the pears went to the ground. That was really cute, *because* I say so little, and how he went to see the girl. I thought it was really funny.’

Due to the stereotypical, albeit somewhat romanticized, semantic link between little boys and being ‘cute’, a semantic reading is possible, which may be paraphrased as: The boy’s being very little and looking at the girl caused the scene, which S1 (F, 66–75) has just described (referred to with *eso*, ‘that’) to be ‘very cute’ (*graciosísimo*). However, an epistemic paraphrase is equally viable: The reason why S1 thought/concluded that the scene was really cute was because the boy was so little...” In this case the speaker supports her conclusion, which involves her subjective evaluation of the scene, with an argument.

In (55), S2 (F, 66–75) expresses her reaction to the group of boys’ behavior in the film:

- (55) S2: ...Pero el detalle de los chiquillos me ha gustado mucho *porque* han sido muy prudentes. Parecían vagamundos, sin embargo tenían una educación extraordinaria.  
 ‘...But I liked the gesture by the little boys a lot *because* they were very prudent. They seemed like street urchins, nevertheless they were extraordinarily polite.’

Here, the boys’ being “prudent” and “polite” caused S2’s psychological state, i.e., her liking their gesture, rendering it a semantic relation of cause and effect. At the same time, a pragmatic interpretation is possible: The reason why S2 concludes (epistemic) and states (speech act) that she liked the boys’ gesture is because of their prudent and polite behavior. This interpretation illustrates how *porque* relations with epistemic readings also involve justification for expressing (i.e., stating) these relations, suggesting that epistemic causals may pertain to a broader category of speech act causals involving justification for the speaker’s preceding statement.

S6 (F, 16) explains why the pearpicker does not understand why he is missing a basket of pears, since he never sees anyone take it:

- (56) L: Y se queda allí un poco... Y se queda mm pensativo de que a lo mejor se lo han robado ellos//pero no sabe cómo.  
 S6: Claro. Pero no lo entiende *porque* él tampoco ve que lleven el cesto de las peras.  
 ‘L: And he ends up there feeling a little... And he ends up uh thinking that maybe they’ve stolen it from him//but he doesn’t know how.  
 S6: Of course. But he doesn’t understand *because* he doesn’t see them take the basket of pears.’

Again, both the semantic and the epistemic paraphrase tests work: The fact that the man does not see them take the basket of pears causes the fact that he does not understand it (i.e., what happened to the missing basket of pears) (semantic); and, the fact that the man does not see them take the basket of pears causes S6 to *conclude* that the man does not understand it (i.e., what happened to it) (epistemic).

S7 (F, 18) describes the difficulty with which the boy rides his bike with the stolen basket of pears on the handlebars:

- (57) S7: ...Entonces pues va con la bicicleta así con un poco de dificultad ¿no? *porque* entre que le venía grande y la capaza y eso, ...  
 '...Then well he goes along on the bike sort of with a little difficulty, doesn't he?  
*because* between [the fact that] it was big for him and the basket and all.'

The semantic link between one's riding an oversized bike with a large basket of pears on it and having "difficulty" doing so suggests that a semantic reading is intended, which is paraphrasable as: The reason why he was riding the bike with difficulty is that the bike was big for him and he had a basket of pears on it. However, an epistemic paraphrase passes the test too: The reason why I think/concluded that he was riding the bike with difficulty is that the bike was big for him... Additionally, S7's use of the rhetorical question, *¿no?* ('doesn't he') before *porque* seems to be an appeal to the interlocutors to consider her reasoning (i.e., to consider her conclusion as valid), while indicating her own subjective involvement in the construal of causality. In other words, the presence of the rhetorical question suggests that this *porque* relation is an "internal act of concluding" and therefore pragmatic (Oversteegan 1997, p. 57; see also, e.g., Sanders and Spooren 1997; Pander Maat and Sanders 2000; Stukker and Sanders 2012).

S10 (F, 36–45) provides reasons for describing the pearpicker's work as being difficult for him:

- (58) S10: Y entonces, le estaba costando mucho trabajo al: al hombre *porque* era grueso y mayor ¿no?  
 'And so, it was really a lot of work for the: for the man *because* he was heavy and old, right?'

Here, the speaker attributes the difficulty the pearpicker was having while gathering pears to the fact that he was overweight and old (a semantic cause). However, the possible insertion of both metapragmatic phrases suggests that the relation has two potential readings:

- (59) S10: ...Y entonces, le estaba costando mucho trabajo al: al hombre {*y lo digo/y lo he concluido*} *porque* era grueso y mayor ¿no?  
 '...And so, it was really a lot of work for the: for the man (*and I'm saying it/and I've concluded it*) *because* he was heavy and old, right?'

Although the film does not explicitly show or tell film-viewers that the man had difficulty picking the pears, one can infer that the work was difficult based on stereotypical assumptions, including the idea that it can be hard for older, heavysset people to do physical labor. Thus, two interpretations are possible for this *porque* relation, which may be paraphrased as: The fact that the man is heavy and old causes the fact that it was hard work for the him (semantic); and, the fact that the man is heavy and old causes S10's *conclusion* that it was (probably) hard work for him (epistemic). Furthermore, the tag question *¿no?* (here, 'right') promotes an epistemic reading over a semantic one, as the speaker's use of this rhetorical device seems to encourage her interlocutors to consider her viewpoint, thus revealing her role as the source of the causal relation.

The possibility of assigning both an epistemic and a semantic reading to certain causal relations in the Spanish narratives appears to be linked to the fact that in such cases, speakers provide explanations, reasons or probable causes for somewhat

noncontroversial elements in the film, involving either visually evident or stereotypically inferable physical, mental, or emotional states and their causes, e.g.: the boys thought...because...; the boy had difficulty...because...; the man does not understand...because...; the man gets annoyed...because..., etc. That is, when both an epistemic and a semantic reading are tenable, speakers describe features that may be observed objectively in the film and also subjectively inferred from it, which may explain the potential for two readings.

The five *porque* relations that could be interpreted as either semantic or speech act causals involved sequences with constructed monologue or dialogue (two out of the five cases) or the narrator's giving a cause for a psychological reaction (semantic), which could also be construed as giving justification for reporting that reaction in the narrative (speech act). For example, in the following excerpt, S28 (F, 26–35) creates a monologue, adopting the role and voice of the boy who falls off his bike causing the basket of pears to spill to the ground. This monologue, in which S28 changes her tone of voice to take on the role of the boy, is indicated in quotation marks in (60). In this case, only the speech act metapragmatic phrase *y lo digo* ('and I'm saying it') may be inserted felicitously before *porque*:

- (60) S28: ...Así que llega, se le caen todas las peras, todas desparramadas, “qué mala pata que he tenido con las peras, voy a cogerlas corriendo {*y lo digo/#y lo he concluido*} porque si no el Tío Mariano me verá.”...  
 ‘...So he arrives, he drops all the pears, all scattered, “what bad luck I’ve had with all the pears, I’m going to pick them up quickly {*and I’m saying it/#and I’ve concluded it*} because if I don’t Uncle Mariano will see me.”’...

Both a speech act and a semantic paraphrase may be constructed from the monologue created by S28: The reason I’m *saying* that I’m going to pick the pears up quickly is that if I do not Uncle Mariano will see me (speech act); and, the reason I’m going to pick the pears up quickly is that if I do not, Uncle Mariano will see me.

In (61), as in (60), only the metapragmatic speech act phrase may be added felicitously before *porque*:

- (61) S4: ...Luego al bajar, temiéndome que se rompiera la escalera, {*y lo digo/#y lo he concluido*} *porque*: tin tan el hombre se veía pesao, las ha depositao en una un: cesto....  
 ‘...Later after climbing down, [I was] fearing that the ladder would break, {*and I’m saying it/#and I’ve concluded it*} *because*: se the man looked heavy, he deposited them in a a: basket...’

The possibility of two interpretations for S4’s (F, 66–75) causal relation appears to be due to the fact that, on the one hand, her psychological reaction is caused by an external, observable situation, and thus there is a semantic link between cause and consequence, e.g.: The reason S1 was fearing that the ladder would break was that the man looked heavy (i.e., her fear was caused by the fact that the man looked heavy). On the other hand, S1’s *porque* utterance may be interpreted as justificational, that is, as an explanation for why she *says* she was afraid, rendering it a speech act causal: The reason I’m *saying* that I was afraid the ladder would break is that the man looked heavy (i.e., heavy enough to break the ladder). *Porque* relations such as this one, involving psychological reactions to events or situations experienced by the speaker, can be interpreted as either semantic, whereby the speaker gives a

reason for a psychological state or reaction, or they may be justificational speech act causals, in which the speaker gives a reason for reporting her psychological reaction.

## 7 Conclusions

The fact that the majority of the causal relations with *porque* in the Spanish pear film narratives were epistemic (57, or 45% of a total of 127 cases), and several more could be construed as either semantic or epistemic (27, or 21% of the cases), is not surprising on account of the fact that the 30 narrators were recalling and talking about a film they had just watched. As a result, they gave reasons for events and situations in the film based on what they speculated, assumed, or inferred from often stereotypical or cultural expectations. In other words, the type of task, recalling and retelling a film under experimental conditions, lends itself to more subjective, interpretive expressions of epistemic causality.

Though the use of a set of proposed paraphrases for epistemic, speech act, and semantic causal relations proved to be useful in determining the type of causality involved in a stretch of discourse, determining causal type using these paraphrases was not always straightforward. Also, at times an appropriate paraphrase could not be construed without adding contextual material to it, which needed to be inferred from the discourse context, but was not stated explicitly in the narrative. The paraphrases proposed by Sanders (1997) and Goethals (2010), which were used to detect and categorize causal relations in the present study, may account well for sentence-level causal relations, but when analyzing discourse relations, the way these paraphrases should be constructed is not always obvious (and in fact several possible versions may be possible). The most discursively natural and easily applied test for pragmatic cases of causality was the insertion of the metapragmatic speech act and epistemic phrases *y lo digo* ('and I'm saying it') and *y lo he concluido* ('and I've concluded it') before *porque*. Furthermore, whenever the latter phrase could be felicitously inserted, the former speech act phrase, *y lo digo*, was also felicitous. This suggests that an epistemic causal interpretation entails a speech act interpretation, though not vice versa; that is, in the case of epistemic causal relations, the speaker not only justifies his/her inference or conclusion with the *porque* utterance but also, simultaneously, provides justification for *expressing* that conclusion (i.e., realizing the speech act) in the previous utterance. We might therefore view epistemic causal relations as being a subtype of speech act causals (but not vice versa), while use of both types of *porque* relations are metapragmatic acts. In sum, epistemic expressions of causality may be viewed as entailing speech act expressions of causality, whereas strictly speech act causals cannot be construed as epistemic; but, both types of causality entail metapragmatic reflection.

The fact that some *porque* relations could pass the paraphrase tests for both epistemic causality and semantic causality made it useful to examine indicators of subjectivity conveyed through the speaker's use of self-references, verbs of cognition

and perception, and rhetorical questions in order to help determine causal domain. These discourse strategies indicate the speaker's subjective involvement in construing causal relations, which in turn support a pragmatic interpretation. More generally, the results of this analysis point to the fact that interpreting the meaning of causal relations in spoken discourse often requires that we analyze various features of the larger discourse context in which causal constructions occur, and not only the minimal clauses preceding and following causal connectives such as *porque*.

## Appendix

### *Transcription Conventions*

With the exception of question marks, the conventions used to transcribe the Spanish narratives are taken from Levinson (1983, pp. 369–370), who notes that many of these conventions were developed by Gail Jefferson and others. The transcription attempts to reflect the speakers' pronunciation using Spanish orthography. For example, verb forms such as *gustado* ('liked') are transcribed *gustao* to reflect the deletion of /d/.

- // point at which the current utterance is overlapped by that transcribed below
- (.) pause—potentially significant but short
- : lengthened syllables
- :: longer lengthened syllables
- glottal stop self editing marker
- == latched utterances with no gap
- ¿? punctuation marks for questions
- . used to indicate falling intonation contour
- , used to indicate maintained (continuing) intonation contour
- (( )) used to specify 'some phenomenon that the transcriber does not want to wrestle with' or some nonvocal action, e.g., ((doorbell rings))
- () uncertain passages of the script
- CAPS words or syllables stressed by amplitude, pitch, or duration

### Summary of *The Pear Film* (Chafe 1980, pp. xiii–xiv)

The film begins with a man picking pears on a ladder in a tree. He descends the ladder, kneels, and dumps the pears from the pocket of an apron he is wearing into one of three baskets below the tree. He removes a bandana from around his neck and wipes off one of the pears. Then he returns to the ladder and climbs back into the tree.

Toward the end of this sequence we hear the sound of a goat, and when the picker is back in the tree a man approaches with a goat on a leash. As they pass by the baskets of pears, the goat strains toward them, but is pulled past by the man and the two of them disappear in the distance.

We see another closeup of the picker at his work, and then we see a boy approaching on a bicycle. He coasts in toward the baskets, stops, gets off his bike, looks up at the picker, puts down his bike, walks toward the baskets, again looking at the picker, picks up a pear, puts it back down, looks once more at the picker, and lifts up a basket full of pears. He puts the basket down near his bike, lifts up the bike and straddles it, picks up the basket and places it on the rack in front of his handlebars, and rides off. We again see the man continuing to pick pears.

The boy is now riding down the road, and we see a pear fall from the basket on his bike. Then we see a girl on a bicycle approaching from the other direction. As they pass, the boy turns to look at the girl, his hat flies off, and the front wheel of his bike hits a rock. The bike falls over, the basket falls off, and the pears spill out onto the ground. The boy extricates himself from under the bike, and brushes off his leg.

In the meantime we hear what turns out to be the sound of a paddleball, and then we see three boys standing there, looking at the bike boy on the ground. The three pick up the scattered pears and put them back in the basket. The bike boy sets his bike upright, and two of the other boys lift the basket of pears back onto it. The bike boy begins walking his bike in the direction he was going, while the three boys begin walking off in the other direction.

As they walk by the bike boy's hat on the road, the boy with the paddleball sees it, picks it up, turns around, and we hear a loud whistle as he signals to the bike boy. The bike boy stops, takes three pears out of the basket, and holds them out as the other boy approaches with the hat. They exchange the pears and the hat, and the bike boy keeps going while the boy with the paddleball runs back to his two companions, to each of whom he hands a pear. They continue on, eating their pears.

The scene now changes back to the tree, where we see the picker again descending the ladder. He looks at the two baskets, where earlier there were three, points at them, backs up against the ladder, shakes his head, and tips up his hat. The three boys are now seen approaching, eating their pears. The picker watches them pass by, and they walk off into the distance.

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# Argumentation and Connectives

## How Do Discourse Connectives Constrain Argumentation and Utterance Interpretations?

Jacques Moeschler

**Abstract** This chapter is about argumentation and connectives. It first gives a general definition of argumentation, as a relation between arguments and conclusions, such that arguments have as properties polarity, force, order, linguistic marking, and logical impairment. The function of an argument is to assign an argumentative orientation to an utterance and make acceptable conclusions that would be unacceptable without the presence of an argument.

Second, the chapter gives a pragmatic description of close meanings connectives, implying causal, inferential, and temporal inferences (*parce que, donc, et* in French). Linguistic as well as experimental findings are given to support the thesis that causality is linguistically and cognitively a backward relation, and that *parce que* is a backward causal connective. Finally, causality and argumentation are conceptually and linguistically connected via the analysis of the argumentative use of *parce que*.

In a nutshell, the main thesis of the chapter is that discourse connectives are devices that convey different levels of meaning, as semantic entailment, explicature, and implicature. For close connectives, their semantic differences do not rest on their conceptual content, but rather on the manner by which basic semantic and argumentative categories are conveyed in discourse, that is, their procedural meaning. French connectives, as *parce que, donc, et* (“because,” “therefore,” “and”), all include in their meaning a causal relation, the difference being the level at which this relation intervenes. The chapter aims at yielding a precise content to semantic and pragmatic meaning relations triggered by connectives, and, more specifically, the role of entailment, explicature, and implicature in discourse connectives meaning.

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## 1 Introduction

Argumentation is a very old topic and has been approached by scholars in many fields during the past centuries. During the twentieth century, it has been mainly studied in logic and philosophy (Barth and Martens 1982 for instance). In this chapter, I would like to pursue a task initiated by the French linguist Oswald Ducrot in the 1980s trying to connect argumentation and linguistic devices, and, more precisely, discourse connectives (Ducrot et al. 1980; Moeschler 1989; Moeschler 2006a for a general survey).

Discourse connectives are adverbials, conjunctions, and complex nominal phrases belonging to different grammatical categories, having as a main function to connect discourse units (Moeschler 2006b). Some formal approaches on discourse, such as rhetorical structure theory (RST; Kehler 2004), discourse representation theory (DRT; Kamp and Reyle 1993), and segmented discourse representation theory (SDRT; Asher and Lascarides 2003), have defined discourse connectives as devices indicating discourse relations. Other approaches on discourse, such as cognitive ones (Sanders and Sweetser 2009), connect discourse connective to general processes in cognitive categorization, as causality, implying objective, subjective, and volitional parameters.

Even if my approach to connectives has been mainly influenced by Ducrot's theory of argumentation (Moeschler 1989), in this chapter I would like to address general issues in pragmatics: the nature of conveyed meaning through discourse connectives as a way to achieve intentions and argumentation, as well as to influence one's audience.

The main thesis developed in this chapter can be stated as follows: *Discourse connectives are devices that convey different levels of meaning, such as semantic entailment, explicature, and implicature.* For proximate connectives, their semantic differences do not rest on differences in their conceptual content, but rather in the manner by which basic semantic and argumentative categories are conveyed in discourse. To take a simple example, French connectives, as *parce que*, *donc*, *et* ("because," "therefore," "and"), all include in their meaning a causal relation, the difference being the level at which causal relations take place. This chapter aims to outline a precise content to semantic and pragmatic meaning relations triggered by connectives.

This chapter is organized as follows. Section 2 introduces a pragmatic account of argumentation, based on an argument–conclusion relationship, including polarity, force, order, and linguistic marking. Section 3 describes three related types of connectives: causal, inferential, and temporal, and gives distributional and psycholinguistic evidences for strong pragmatic and cognitive differences between them. Section 4 is devoted to French *parce que* and gives an explanation for its argumentative uses. Section 5 hypothesizes a formal analysis of causal, inferential, and

temporal connectives based on semantic and pragmatic differences at the level of entailment, explication, and implicature and makes a general proposal on the nature of causal meaning triggered by *parce que*, *donc*, and *et*.

## 2 A Pragmatic Account for Argumentation

What is argumentation? From a pragmatic perspective, argumentation is a way by which reasons are given to support a conclusion. Reasons are linguistically encoded in arguments. So argumentation is a relation between an argument and a conclusion.

The reasons why conclusions should be supported by arguments are many. Take the strongest: A conclusion supported by an argument is more acceptable than a bare assertion. Suppose, for instance, that my daughter is asking me if she can spend a weekend with her boyfriend. If she utters (1), I would probably ask her for an explanation or a reason, as in (2). But if she gives me a reason and thus anticipates my question, I will be more inclined to agree with her request:

- (1) Daddy, can I spend the weekend with my boyfriend?
- (2) Why?
- (3) Daddy, can I spend the weekend with my boyfriend? I would like to go with him to the Arena concert.

### 2.1 Properties of Arguments

Arguments have five main properties: polarity, force, order, linguistic marking, and logical impairment.

First, they have a *polarity*. It means that an argument can support a positive or negative conclusion. For instance in (4), *Abi is smart* supports a positive conclusion that *she will pass*, whereas *she is lazy* supports the opposite, negative conclusion (*she will not pass*):

- (4) *Abi is smart but she is lazy.*

Second, arguments have a *force*. Some arguments are stronger than others. For instance, *even* introduces a stronger argument: if *Paul loves Mary*, *Bill loves Mary too* can be arguments for the Mary's loveliness, then *even Ted loves Mary* in (5) will be presented as a stronger argument, not because of the facts in the world, but because of *even*, which marks it as the strongest one. This can be easily showed by scalar predicates, as in (6) and (7) '?? = semantically odd':

- (5) Paul loves Mary, Bill too loves Mary, and even Ted.
- (6) It is probable, and even certain, that Ted loves Mary.
- (7) ?? It is certain, and even probable, that Ted loves Mary.

Third, arguments are *ordered*, and can be ranked. For instance, *avoir un peu bu* ("having drunk a little") and *avoir beaucoup bu* ("having drunk a lot") have a positive polarity, but the first is weaker and is thus lower in a semantic scale. On the

contrary, *avoir peu bu* (“having drunk little”) is negatively oriented and is weaker on a negative scale than *ne rien avoir bu du tout* (“having drunk nothing at all”), as examples (8) to (11) show:

- (8) J’ai un peu bu, et même beaucoup.  
 “I drank a little, and even much.”  
 (9) ?? J’ai beaucoup bu, et même un peu.  
 “I drank a lot, and even a little.”  
 (10) J’ai peu bu, et même rien du tout.  
 “I drank little, and even nothing at all.”  
 (11) ?? Je n’ai rien bu du tout, et même un peu.  
 “I drank nothing at all, and even a little.”

Four, arguments can be *linguistically marked*. In (12), there is no linguistic device indicating that the second clause is an argument for the first one, whereas in (13) the argument function is made explicit by the connective *because*:

- (12) Paul came back. He loves her.  
 (13) Paul came back because he loves her.

Last but not least, argument relations can be *logically impaired*: for instance, *presque P* (“almost P”) logically means *not-P*, but it is positively and not negatively oriented, as (14) and (15) show:

- (14) Le dîner est-il prêt?  
 a. Oui, presque.  
 b. ?? Non, presque.  
 “Is dinner ready?”  
 a. “Yes, almost.”  
 b. “No, almost.”  
 (15) Le dîner est-il prêt?  
 a. Non, pas tout à fait.  
 b. ?? Oui, pas tout à fait.  
 “Is dinner ready?”  
 a. “No, not yet.”  
 b. “Yes, not yet.”

As these series of examples show, a linguistic marker best supports an argumentation. The argumentative markers are discourse connectives, like *but*, *even*, *because*; operators like *almost*; and quantifiers like *few*, *a few*, *little*, or *a little*.

## 2.2 Functions of Arguments

The next question to be addressed is the function of argumentation. Argumentation has two main functions: first, to give an utterance its argumentative orientation; second, to make acceptable conclusions that would be less acceptable or unacceptable without arguments.

First, argumentation is a way of giving an orientation to an utterance for supporting a class of conclusions; conclusions (16a, b)–(19a, b) show that there is no one-to-one relation between an argument and a conclusion, and that an argument, because of its semantic properties, can support a whole class of possible conclusions:

- (16) Abi is too young.
  - a. She cannot go out to the karaoke.
  - b. She cannot drink alcohol.
- (17) Abi is smart.
  - a. She will get good grades
  - b. She will have an academic career.
- (18) Abi spent six months in Japan.
  - a. She can speak Japanese.
  - b. She can write hiragana and katakana characters.
- (19) Abi is coming back on Tuesday.
  - a. I am so happy to see her after such a long time.
  - b. We will organize a big party to welcome her.

The second function of argumentation is to make acceptable or more acceptable a conclusion that would be unacceptable without any argument or without any linguistic device signaling the utterance as an argument. In (20), the presence of *d'ailleurs* (“besides”) makes acceptable a conclusion that would be unacceptable in the context of utterance (it was just after the beginning of the Libyan revolution):

- (20) Kadhafi n'est plus le même qu'il y a vingt ans et a soif de respectabilité. Il lit d'ailleurs Montesquieu.  
 “Gaddafi is no longer the same as 20 years ago and is eager for respectability. Besides/moreover, he reads Montesquieu.”  
 (Patrick Ollier, a French Minister, *Libération*, 22 February 2011)

In (20), *d'ailleurs* introduces what Ducrot et al. (1980) calls an independent argument. In the context of utterance, this argument is odd, even if the discourse connective gives it a flavor of acceptability.

### 2.3 Arguments and Counterarguments

The third property of argumentation is the relation between an argument and a counterargument. Any argument can be defeated by a counterargument. What is crucial in order to compare arguments supporting different conclusions is their force. The force of an argument is based on (1) assumptions about the world, (2) the strength of the assumption, and (3) the argumentative orientation of the utterance. Some assumptions are more acceptable than others. For instance, the oddity of Patrick Ollier's argumentation in (20) is due to the fact that reading Montesquieu is not relevant for judging Gaddafi's respectability. Moreover, the plausibility of the truth of this argument is weak.

However, the second property (*strength*) is crucial too. In (20), the argument introduced by *d'ailleurs* is independent: What it means is that there is no direct relation between an argument and its conclusion.<sup>1</sup> The last property (*orientation*) is given either by intrinsic semantic features of lexical items or by a linguistic marker, for instance a connective.

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<sup>1</sup> Literally, *d'ailleurs* means “from another place.”

These three properties—counterarguments, strength, and argumentation—can be illustrated with the connective *mais* (“but”), in contrast with *et* (“and”). *Mais* introduces a counterargument, which is stronger than its first argument, both argument and counterargument having opposite polarities. Let us examine the following examples:

- (21) a. Paul est intelligent, mais paresseux.  
 “Paul is smart, but lazy.”  
 b.?? Paul n’est pas intelligent, mais paresseux.  
 “Paul is not smart, but lazy.”
- (22) a. Paul est paresseux, mais intelligent.  
 “Paul is lazy, but smart.”  
 b. Paul n’est pas paresseux, mais intelligent.  
 “Paul is not lazy, but smart.”
- (23) a. Abi est belle et intelligente.  
 “Abi is gorgeous and smart.”  
 b.?? Abi est belle mais intelligente.  
 “Abi is gorgeous but smart.”  
 c.? Abi est intelligente mais belle.  
 “Abi is smart but gorgeous.”

In (21a), both predicates have opposite argumentative orientations: *paresseux* (“lazy”) has a negative one, whereas *intelligent* (“smart”) is positively oriented. This explains why (21b) is argumentatively inconsistent: *mais* has, as its main instruction, to contrast two opposite conclusions, and since *not being smart* is negatively oriented, as *being lazy*, what is contrasted is not argumentatively opposed.

In (22), the reverse order of predicates gives the same result for (22a); if (22b) is acceptable, it is because *mais* is not argumentative, but corrective: The speaker is denying that Paul is lazy and correcting his speech with an alternative clause (Anscombe and Ducrot 1977; Moeschler 1989).

Finally, in (23), *gorgeous* and *smart* are co-oriented and cannot be connected by *mais*: Only *et* makes the connection possible. For this reason, (23b) and (23c) are odd because of the implicatures conveyed by *mais*: There is no contradiction between being both gorgeous and smart.

These examples show two strong properties of argumentations. First, the argumentative orientation is, in general, inferred from the semantic properties of linguistic items. For instance, the positive orientation of *smart* and *gorgeous* are very general, and the class of conclusions they can support is not, without a well-defined context, specified. Second, what gives their orientations to utterance is not only their intrinsic semantic properties but also a much more contentless meaning, that is, *procedural meanings* of connectives (Blakemore 1987; Wilson and Sperber 1993; Escandell-Vidal et al. 2011). The contrast between *mais* and *et* is a good example, because they share the same truth conditions. *Mais* is semantically a conjunction that presupposes the truth of its conjuncts, as *et*.<sup>2</sup> So what makes the difference between (23a) and (23b, c) is the orientation inferred by *mais* relatively to *et*. *Et* is neutral, as (24) shows, whereas *mais* introduces a contrast:

<sup>2</sup> This property has been stated in earlier work in linguistic, e.g., Bühler (1934). Cf. Moeschler (2014) for the relation between Bühler’s theory and Gricean pragmatics.

- (24) a. Paul est intelligent et paresseux.  
 “Paul is smart and lazy.”  
 b. Paul est intelligent mais paresseux.  
 “Paul is smart but lazy.”

## 2.4 *Argumentation and Negation*

What happens with negation? As we have seen in example (21b), negation changes the argumentative polarity. Indeed, negation is semantically lower bounded, as shown in (25b) and (25c):

- (25) a. Abi is 21 years old: she can go out and drink alcohol in Tokyo.  
 b. Abi is not 21 years old: she cannot go out and drink alcohol in Tokyo.  
 c. ?? Abi is not 21 years old: she can go out and drink alcohol in Tokyo.

The negative argument in (25b) changes the polarity of the conclusion, since (25c) is argumentatively inconsistent, (??) unless Japanese law restricts drinking alcohol to people younger than 21 years (25c).

With metalinguistic negation, negation is upper-bound, as (26) and (27) show:

- (26) a. Anne has four children: she is a superwoman.  
 b.?? Anne does not have four children: she is not a superwoman.  
 (27) a. Anne does not have three children; she has two. She is an ordinary woman.  
 b. Anne does not have three children; she has four. She is a superwoman.

If we assume that having four children is an argument for being a superwoman (26a), as descriptive negation (26b) shows, then (27b) shows that metalinguistic negation is upper-bound and that an upper-bounded argument can be an argument for a positive conclusion. On the contrary, in (27a) descriptive negation is lower-bound: *not having three children* entails *having two children* in descriptive negation.

## 2.5 *A Pragmatic Approach to Argumentation*

A pragmatic approach to argumentation should explain how the argument–conclusion relation is inferred. The given examples lead to two main directions. First, argumentation could be approached through the way lexical items give orientations to utterances. This direction has been explicitly and exhaustively taken in argumentation theory (Anscombe and Ducrot 1983). This approach makes a very strong statement: Argumentative orientation is a basic semantic property of lexical items, and if they bear descriptive or conceptual content, it is mainly as a result of their argumentative uses.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This assumption is strong because subjective predicates, as *smart*, *gorgeous*, that is, predicates that can be modified by hedges as *very*, *in my opinion*, *in a certain manner*, *a kind of* (Moeschler and Reboul 1994, p. 378), have no intrinsic descriptive content by themselves (Ducrot 1983). Their descriptive content is a result of their usage, what Benveniste (1964) called *delocutivity*.



This is not the line of the argumentation I follow in this chapter; I propose to tackle argumentation through a procedural approach. What I am interested in is the way procedural content conveyed by discourse connectives constrains argumentations, that is, how connectives impose argumentative orientations to discourse segments, and how they convey argumentation relations. In the following section, I will make a precise distinction between causal, temporal, and inferential connectives to describe the way causal relations can convey argumentations.

My approach is pragmatic because it is based on the assumption that connectives are complex linguistic units conveying both a descriptive—or conceptual—content and a procedural one. The distinction between conceptual and procedural contents will be straightforward: Conceptual meaning corresponds to lexical meaning, whereas procedural content corresponds to a set of instructions on how to process conceptual contents. As we will see, connectives play a major role in argumentations, because of their conceptual and procedural contents. At the end of the chapter, I propose that whereas conceptual meaning is associated to logical entailments triggered by connectives, their procedural meanings launch implicatures and explicatures, that is, implicit and non-truth-functional meanings on the one hand, and explicit and truth-functional meanings on the other.

### 3 Causal, Temporal, and Inferential Connectives

In this section, I would like to introduce a difference between three types of connectives conveying a causal meaning, represented by *parce que* (because), *donc* (therefore) and *et* (and). The semantic and distributional differences observed will lead to relate causality and argumentation in the next section.

Let us begin by comparing two discourses, the first implying the cause–consequence order between events, the second the reverse order (consequence–cause):

- (28) a. Jean est tombé dans un précipice. Il s'est cassé la jambe.  
 "John fell into a precipice. He broke his leg."  
 b. Jean s'est cassé la jambe. Il est tombé dans un précipice.  
 "John broke his leg. He fell into a precipice."

Interestingly enough, the pragmatic meaning in (28) can be made explicit by the temporal and causal relationships given in (29):

- (29) a. PAST[John falls] < PAST[John breaks his leg]  
 b. PAST[John falls] CAUSE PAST[John breaks his leg]

Although (28a) and (28b) have the same truth conditions, they do not have the same pragmatic meanings. A standard test to prove this assumption is to ask which question they answer. Whereas (28a) answers question (30a) and not question (30b), it is the other way around for (28b):

- (30) a. Qu'est-ce qui est arrivé à Jean?  
 "What happened to John?"  
 b. # Pourquoi Jean est-il tombé dans un précipice?  
 "Why did John fall into a precipice?"

- (31) a. Pourquoi Jean s'est-il cassé la jambe?  
 "Why did John break his leg?"  
 b. # Qu'est-ce qui est arrivé à Jean?  
 "What happened to John?"

In other words, question (30a) requires answer (32), and question (31a) answer (33):

- (32) Qu'est-ce qui est arrivé à Jean? Il s'est cassé la jambe.  
 "What happened to John? He broke his leg."  
 (33) Pourquoi Jean s'est cassé la jambe? Parce qu'il est tombé dans un précipice.  
 "Why did John break his leg? Because he fell into a precipice."

Now, since a method for distinguishing between the pragmatics of *temporal* (28) and *causal* (29) discourses has been provided, it is possible to show that inferential (*donc*) and temporal (*et*) connectives do not have the same behavior and do not yield the same readings as causal ones (*parce que*). This demonstration (Moeschler 2011) is based on examples with aspectual combinations (event–event, event–state, state–event, state–state), the consequence–cause and cause–consequence orders, and the difference between causal and inferential readings.

The results of these combinations are given in Annexes A and B. Annex A contains all possible combinations with *parce que* ("because"), whereas Annex B contains all possible uses with *donc* ("therefore") and *et* ("and"). So, these tables give 24 possible utterances, as a result of three connectives (*parce, donc, et*), two orders (cause–consequence, consequence–cause) and four aspectual combinations (event–event, event–state, state–event, state–state).

Annex A shows that *parce que* allows all possible causal readings in the consequence–cause order, whatever the aspectual combination is (series 1). In the reverse (iconic) order, *parce que* gives rise to inferential or epistemic readings, whatever the aspectual combination is. This distribution has to be contrasted with inferential (*donc*) and temporal (*et*) connectives. If we use them in the iconic order (cause–consequence), the causal reading is not obtained in all possible aspectual combinations. With *donc* (series 3) causal readings are obtained only when the cause is a state. When the cause is an event, the possibility of the falsehood of the consequence is due to the fact that the speaker is inferring the possibility of the consequence, as the insertion of modal operators in (34b, c) shows:

- (34) a. Marie a poussé Jean, donc il est tombé.  
 "Mary pushed John, therefore he fell."  
 b. Marie a poussé Jean, donc il est probablement tombé.  
 "Mary pushed John, therefore he probably fell."  
 c. Marie a poussé Jean, donc, selon moi, il est tombé.  
 "Mary pushed John, therefore, according to me, he fell."

With *et* (series 4), it is the other way around: The causal reading is only obtained with an eventive cause—with a state as a cause, the relation is simply not causal.

In contrast, series 5 (consequence–cause order) show that *donc* yields for all combinations an inferential reading, whereas *et* does not allow any combinations with a noniconic order. Table 1 gives a general picture of the causal reading with the iconic and non-iconic order for all three connectives:

**Table 1** Distribution of causal, inferential, and temporal connectives

	Causal readings			Inferential readings		
	<i>Parce que</i> CONS– CAUSE	<i>Donc</i> CAUSE– CONS	<i>et</i> CAUSE– CONS	<i>Parce que</i> CAUSE– CONS	<i>Donc</i> CONS– CAUSE	<i>et</i> CONS– CAUSE
Event–event	+	–	+	+	+	–
Event–state	+	–	+	+	+	–
State–state	+	+	–	+	+	–
State–event	+	+	?	+	+	–

What conclusions can be drawn from Table 1? It can be observed that a causal reading is completely guaranteed by only one connective, *parce que*, and that when *parce que* is used, the cognitive cost is to process sentences in the noniconic order. In other words, *parce que* guarantees that a causal relationship is at stake, but seriously jeopardizes the noniconic order.

When an iconic (cause–consequence) order is used, one of two connectives is necessary to convey the causal reading: *donc*, when the cause is a state, and *et* when the cause is an event. Notice that *parce que* can also be used in an iconic order; that is, in an inferential and epistemic way.

The general picture given in Table 1, therefore, is that *parce que* is the best way to insure a causal reading. It appears that there is no linguistically conventional way to insure an iconic causal reading, as Diessel and Hetterle (2011) demonstrate in their typological analysis. The first and very important conclusion to have been reached here is that there is, in fact, no forward causal connective in languages like French.

Besides this distributional argument, an experimental one can be given too. I will give a very brief survey of a first conclusion obtained from two experiments (Moeschler et al. 2006). The first experiment was a simple elicitation task: We prompted a series of eventive sentences composed of eight syllables and ask 38 students to complete the stimuli either by a cause (20 students) or a consequence (18 students). Thirty-six stimuli were offered for each subject.<sup>4</sup> From these 36 initial propositions, 10 pairs of propositions were selected, 5 pairs of highly associated propositions (more than 50% of given responses) with the consequence–cause and the cause–consequence order, and 5 weakly associated (less than 35% of given responses) with both orders. The first condition to be tested was the strength of association, and the second condition the order of utterance (cause–consequence vs. consequence–cause). Table 2 (from Moeschler et al. 2006) gives the series of inputs for the second experiment.

These 20 likely utterances were balanced by 20 unlikely utterances (in the order cause–consequence and consequence–cause), and all of these 40 utterances have been checked by control utterances. Twenty-two subjects passed the cause–consequence series, 27 subjects the consequence–cause series, and 22 the control utter-

<sup>4</sup> The extensive analysis of all pairs of examples (cause–consequence and consequence–cause order) is given in Blochowiak et al. (2006).

**Table 2** Ten selected propositions for the experimental

Strength of association	Proposition 1	Proposition 2 (consequence)	Answers (%)	Proposition 2 (cause)	Answers (%)
Strong	<i>Paul a pris ses médicaments,</i> “Paul took his medicine”	<i>il va guérir.</i> “he will recover”	50	<i>il était malade.</i> “he was sick”	94
	<i>Le gendarme a beaucoup couru,</i> “the cop ran a lot”	<i>il est essoufflé.</i> “he is out of breath”	85	<i>il poursuivait quelqu'un.</i> “he was running after someone”	94
	<i>Jérôme a arrosé les plantes,</i> “Jérôme watered the plants”	<i>elles poussent mieux.</i> “they are growing faster”	50	<i>elles avaient besoin d'eau.</i> “they needed water”	55.5
	<i>Jean s'est acheté des lunettes,</i> “John bought himself some glasses”	<i>il voit mieux.</i> “he can see better”	70	<i>il avait des problèmes de vue.</i> “he had vision problems”	50
	<i>Le vase de cristal est tombé,</i> “the crystal vase fell down”	<i>il s'est cassé.</i> “it broke”	70	<i>quelqu'un l'a fait tomber.</i> “someone dropped it”	50
	<i>Mary s'est tordu la cheville,</i> “Mary twisted her ankle”	<i>elle doit se soigner.</i> “she must have it treated”	20	<i>elle faisait du sport.</i> “she was doing sports”	16.6
	<i>La barque a heurté le rocher,</i> “the boat struck the rock”	<i>elle a coulé.</i> “it sank”	35	<i>il y avait du courant.</i> “there were currents”	16.6
	<i>Mary a lu sans ses lunettes,</i> “Mary read without her glasses”	<i>elle n'a rien vu.</i> “she saw nothing”	15	<i>elle voit bien de près.</i> “she is short-sighted”	22.2
	<i>Le chien a attrapé des puces,</i> “the dog has got fleas”	<i>on va l'emmener chez le vétérinaire.</i> “he will be taken to the vet”	20	<i>il s'est roulé dans l'herbe.</i> “he has rolled in the grass”	16.6
	<i>Véronique s'est lavé les mains,</i> “Veronica washed her hands”	<i>elle va passer à table.</i> “she is going to have dinner”	25	<i>elle avait jardiné.</i> “she had done some gardening”	22.2

**Table 3** Reading times (means)

	Weak association	Strong association	Mean
Consequence–cause (ms)	164.8	100.3	132.55
Cause–consequence (ms)	308.84	0.04	154.44
Mean (ms)	236.82	50.17	143.5

ances. The design of the experiment was implemented with E Prime software, and the subject, after having read the prompt, had to read the second proposition and type “e” or “p” for “likely” or “unlikely.”<sup>5</sup> Reading time has been recorded, and the statistical analysis concerns means in reading time.

The results are the following: A post hoc Tukey HSD shows that the difference between orders (cause–consequence vs. consequence–cause) is the case only in weak association ( $p < 0.01$ ). More simply, a significant difference in reading time occurs: The causal reading (consequence–cause) is quicker than the iconic cause–consequence order (164.80 ms against 308.84 ms). Table 3 gives the precise reading time means for strong and weak association, in iconic and noniconic order.<sup>6</sup>

As the weak association reading time shows, the noniconic order (consequence–cause) gives better results, which partially confirms (the iconic order does not) the assumption that noniconic order is not just an effect of linguistic distribution (which could be interpreted as arbitrary from language to language) but also cognitively motivated. In other words, linguistic treatment of causality tends to use a non-natural way of presenting causal relations, that is, a noniconic order.

This finding has a strong implication: What happens when causal connectives as *parce que* are used in a non-causal use, that is, an argumentative one? Section 4 tries to answer this issue.

## 4 *Parce Que*, Causality, and Argumentation

We have seen that *parce que* offers the best solution to express causal relations. But we have discussed only one of its three uses, as described for *because* by Sweetser (1990): besides its causal use, *parce que* has a speech act and an inferential use, exemplified in (35):

- (35) a. Il est revenu parce qu’il l’aime.  
 “He came back because he loves her.”  
 b. Il l’aime, parce qu’il est revenu.  
 “He loves her, because he came back.”  
 c. Tu crois qu’il l’aime? Parce qu’il est revenu.  
 “Do you think he loves her? Because he came back.”

<sup>5</sup> Half of the subjects received the instruction “e” for “likely”, “p” for “unlikely”, and half of them the opposite instruction.

<sup>6</sup> These experiments have been possible thanks to the collaboration of students and researchers of the L2C2 laboratory at the Institute for Cognitive Science, Lyon. Special thanks to Thomas Castelain, who sampled the data and to Corallie Chevalier, who computed all statistics. I thank Jean-Baptiste van der Henst, who designed the experiments.

In (35a), the standard causal reading is obtained, where loving her causes his coming back. In (35b), the order of the discourse is no longer the consequence–cause as in (35a), but the iconic cause–consequence order. Nevertheless, the same causal order is referred to, and the iconic order has as main effect to present the consequence as a reason for believing the cause. Finally, in (35c), *parce que* introduces the justification of a question, that is, the reason why a question is asked. In all cases (Moeschler 2009), a causal relation is at stake, but with different discourse orders and different pragmatic effects.

It has long been recognized that *parce que* has an argumentative use (Groupe  $\lambda$ -1 1975): When it is used in this way, *parce que* introduces an argument rather than a cause. Example (36) is typical of its argumentative use:

- (36) Je ne veux pas manger de broccoli, parce que j'aime pas ça.  
 "I don't want to eat broccoli, because I don't like it."

It is interesting to note that when it is used argumentatively, *parce que* appears to be different from its causal use: it introduces an *argument*. The clause that precedes it is the *conclusion* upheld by the argument. In its causal use, on the other hand, *parce que* introduces a *cause* and is preceded by a *consequence*. Moreover, the causal connection between cause and consequence can be explained through a *causal chain*. Causes precede consequences in a string of events and states which are accessible when a causal reading is the case. On the contrary, arguments and conclusions are not eventualities that follow each other in causal chains; they are propositions. As we saw (Sect. 2), arguments have varying degrees of strength in argumentative scales: the stronger the argument, the stronger the conclusion (Anscombe and Ducrot 1983; Moeschler and Reboul 1994; Moeschler 2006a).

In order to explain the argumentative uses of *parce que*, it is first necessary to find a way of linking *argumentation* and *causality*. This section suggests a way of converting causal relationships into argumentative ones. The general idea is to alter the direction of the consequence–cause order to obtain the correct result. In other words, argumentative uses will be defined as epistemic uses of *parce que*, which guarantee the causal relationship defining its semantics.

How can the argumentative analysis be introduced into this analysis? According to the linguistic argumentative analysis due to Anscombe and Ducrot (1983), the test for attributing an argument status to an utterance is the adjunction of the argumentative operators *presque* ("almost") or *même* ("even"), which, respectively, convey a positive orientation or an argumentative force.

Although utterances in (37) are argumentative—the adjunction of *presque* or *même* gives argument status to the clauses they introduce—the addition of *parce que* is incompatible with these argumentative operators (38):

- (37) a. La Suisse ne méritait pas d'être éliminée de l'EuroFoot: elle a presque gagné contre la Turquie.  
 "Switzerland should not have been eliminated from the EuroFoot Tournament: they almost won against Turkey."  
 b. La Suisse aurait pu gagner l'Euro: elle a même battu la meilleure équipe du tournoi.  
 "Switzerland could have won the EuroFoot Tournament: they even won against the best team of the tournament."

- (38) a. ? La Suisse ne méritait pas d'être éliminée de l'Euro, parce qu'elle a presque gagné contre la Turquie.  
 "Switzerland should not have been eliminated from the EuroFoot Tournament, because they almost won against Turkey."  
 b. ? La Suisse aurait pu gagner l'Euro, parce qu'elle a même battu la meilleure équipe du tournoi.  
 "Switzerland could have won the EuroFoot Tournament, because they even won against the best team of the tournament."

On the other hand, when it is used without *presque* or *même*, *parce que* is acceptable, as shown in (39):

- (39) a. La Suisse ne méritait pas d'être éliminée de l'Euro, parce qu'elle a gagné contre la Turquie.  
 "Switzerland should not have been eliminated from the EuroFoot Tournament, because they won against Turkey."  
 b. La Suisse aurait pu gagner l'Euro, parce qu'elle a battu la meilleure équipe du tournoi.  
 "Switzerland could have won the EuroFoot Tournament, because they won against the best team in the tournament."

A conflict between two properties occurs in these examples: One of the properties gives an argument which is made explicit by *presque* and *même*, while the other gives an explanation which is made explicit by *parce que*.

When the semantic and pragmatic properties of *parce que* and the properties of the argumentative relationship are taken into account, the following conclusion can be derived:

- i. *Parce que* introduces a cause or an explanation.
- ii. An argumentation is a relationship between an argument and a conclusion.

Therefore, if *parce que* is causal and argumentative, two relationships, given in (40), should obtain:

- (40) a. consequence *parce que* cause (causal *parce que*)  
 b. conclusion *parce que* argument (argumentative *parce que*).

In other words, the argumentative *parce que* introduces an argument. Because of the oddity of (38), the following questions become relevant: Can a cause be an argument? Can an explanation be an argument? In other words, is explaining synonymous with arguing for?

The answer is clearly No. Now, this answer must be justified, and I will do so by providing a definition of what an explanation is (Blochowiak 2007, 2014). An explanation is basically an answer to a *why* question. To demonstrate the relationship between explanation and argumentation, I use the following fictitious situation.

Suppose only a few of my students pass their pragmatics exam. The explanation could be put forward that my class is too difficult for BA students. Utterances (41) are appropriate descriptions of this situation:

- (41) a. Peu d'étudiants de Jacques ont réussi leur examen de pragmatique. Son cours est trop difficile pour des étudiants de BA.  
 "Only a few of Jacques' students passed their pragmatics exam. His class is too difficult for BA students."  
 b. Peu d'étudiants de Jacques ont réussi leur examen de pragmatique parce que son cours est trop difficile pour des étudiants de BA.

“Only a few of Jacques’ students passed their pragmatics exam because his class is too difficult for BA students.”

c. Peu d’étudiants de Jacques ont réussi leur examen de pragmatique. Pourquoi? Parce que son cours est trop difficile pour des étudiants de BA.

“Only a few of Jacques’ students passed their pragmatics exam. Why? Because his class is too difficult for BA students.”

d. Pourquoi peu d’étudiants de Jacques ont-ils réussi leur examen de pragmatique? Parce que son cours est trop difficile pour des étudiants de BA.

“Why did only a few of Jacques’ students pass their pragmatics exam? Because his class is too difficult for BA students.”

Suppose now that someone would like to *prove* rather than *explain* that my class is too difficult: His argument could not use the explanation given in the previous examples (*the class is too difficult*), because the fact that only a few students passed would then become an argument for the conclusion that the class is too difficult. In this situation, the way to express this relationship explicitly would be to use the connective *donc*, as in example (42), which implies the argumentative relationship given in (43):

(42) Peu d’étudiants de Jacques ont réussi leur examen de pragmatique, donc son cours est trop difficile.

“Only a few of Jacques’ students passed their pragmatics exam, therefore his class is too difficult.”

(43) ARGUMENT [only a few students passed]  $\wedge$  CONCLUSION [Jacques’ class is too difficult]

The paradox of the situation represented in (42) and (43) is that the argumentative relationship is exactly the same as the explanatory situation given in (41). Now, is it possible to change the argumentation in (42) into an utterance containing *parce que*? This can indeed be done, but the result is surprising because the relationship is causal in (44) rather argumentative, as shown in (45):

(44) Peu d’étudiants de Jacques ont réussi leur examen de pragmatique, parce que son cours est trop difficile.

“Only a few of Jacques’ students passed their pragmatics exam, because his class is too difficult.”

(45) CONSEQUENCE [only a few students passed]  $\wedge$  CAUSE [Jacques’ class is too difficult]

Unfortunately, a contradiction arises between what the argumentative analysis hypothesizes—that *parce que* introduces an argument as in (40b)—and what the pragmatic analysis predicts—that *parce que* introduces a cause as in (40a). The argumentative use of *parce que* does not allow a cause to be an argument. On the contrary, it requires that the cause also be a conclusion. In other words, causes introduced by *parce que* are conclusions rather than arguments.

How could this data be changed to preserve the similarity between the causal and argumentative analyses? The answer is in inverting the order of the discourse segments (46):

(46) Le cours de Jacques est trop difficile pour des étudiants de BA, parce que peu d’étudiants ont réussi leur examen de pragmatique.

“Jacques’ class is too difficult for BA students, because only a few students passed their pragmatics exam.”



Strangely enough, (46) confirms the common sense representation of argumentation: *Parce que* indeed introduces an argument in this example:

(47) CONCLUSION [Jacques' class is too difficult]  $\wedge$  ARGUMENT [only a few students passed]<sup>7</sup>

The best possible usage, with an acceptable balance between causality and argumentation, has now been attained. *Parce que* is used in an *epistemic* way, however, since (47) corresponds to the causal analysis given in (48):

(48) CAUSE [Jacques' class is too difficult]  $\wedge$  CONSEQUENCE [only a few students passed]

This conclusion confirms a previously mentioned hypothesis (*argumentations are special cases of causal relationships*), although with a substantial modification: Argumentative uses of *parce que*, in which *parce que* introduces an argument (48), have been proved to be epistemic and not causal.

There are, therefore, two types of *parce que* related to causality and argumentation:

- (i) an explicative *parce que*, which introduces a cause or a conclusion;
- (ii) an epistemic *parce que*, which introduces a consequence or an argument.

It is now possible to conclude that the argumentative *parce que* is epistemic and that it introduces an argument, just as the classic theory of argumentation predicted.

## 5 A Formal Analysis of French Connectives

Some logical and pragmatic properties of connectives have implicitly been referred to in Sect. 3. I now explore these properties more explicitly, presenting a robust truth-functional analysis of causal, inferential, and temporal connectives in French. The theoretical background on which my arguments are based is the classic distinction in pragmatics between truth-functional aspects of meaning—which belong to the domain of semantic entailment—and pragmatic non-truth-functional aspects of meaning, which rely on implicature.

What are the entailments conveyed by causal, inferential, and temporal discourses? I propose the following:

1. In causal discourses, *parce que* entails the truth of the discourse segments; that is, the cause and the consequence, as stated in (49):

(49)  $P \text{ parce que } Q \rightarrow (P \wedge Q)$

The nature of this entailment is not clear, however. When a speaker uses *parce que* to connect two propositions, is the conjunction  $(P \wedge Q)$  an entailment or a presupposition? In other words, are these propositions true as logical consequences or as

<sup>7</sup> Note that the conclusion–argument order cannot be reproduced by *donc*: ?? *Les cours de Jacques sont trop difficiles pour des étudiants de BA, donc peu d'étudiants ont réussi leur examen de pragmatique.* “Jacques' classes are too difficult for BA students, therefore only a few students passed their pragmatics exam.”

background information? If we adopt a semantic analysis of presupposition, the conjunction ( $P \wedge Q$ ) should be true under negation in a cleft sentence such as (50):

- (50) Ce n'est pas parce que Marie a poussé Jean qu'il est tombé, mais parce qu'il s'est évanoui.  
 "It is not because Mary pushed John that he fell, but because he fainted."

But in this case, only  $P$  is true (*John fell*) but not  $Q$  (*Mary pushed him*). So  $P \wedge Q$  is not a presupposition, but an entailment.

2. On the other hand, the conjunction of the two propositions is not guaranteed in inferential discourses with *donc*:

(51)  $P \text{ donc } Q \nrightarrow (P \wedge Q)$

More specifically, a *donc* inferential relationship only entails the first conjunct and a possible (epistemic) second conjunct, as stated in (52):

(52)  $P \text{ donc } Q \rightarrow (P \wedge \diamond Q)$

This formalization is the formal counterpart of my analysis of the scope of modal operators  $\diamond$  in the second conjunct with *donc*, as shown in examples (34).

3. In temporal discourses (with *et*), the conjunctive implication is guaranteed (53), although the causal implication is not always involved (54). A causal relationship is one possible relationship, whereas *parce que* is conventionally associated with a causal relationship such as in (55):

(53)  $P \text{ et } Q \rightarrow (P \wedge Q)$

(54)  $P \text{ et } Q \rightarrow \diamond(P \text{ CAUSE } Q)$

(55)  $P \text{ parce que } Q \rightarrow (P \wedge Q) \wedge (Q \text{ CAUSE } P)$

4. Inferential discourse does not guarantee a causal relationship, as example (34) has shown. This demonstrates that a consequential as well as a causal relationship is possible:

(56)  $P \text{ donc } Q \rightarrow (P \wedge \diamond Q) \wedge \diamond(P \text{ CAUSE } Q)$

Table 4 summarizes these truth-functional relationships.

It is now easy to formulate a conclusion. Causal discourse, conveyed by *parce que*, implies the truth of its conjuncts and a backward causal relationship. Compared to the information triggered by *donc* and *et*, this information is much more complex. It is, in fact, the most complex semantic relationship that can be conveyed by a connective.

The final point to be discussed is the nature of the interpretation triggered by *parce que* and other connectives such as *donc* and *et*. What is the status of

**Table 4** Truth-functional and nontruth-functional aspects of meaning triggered by causal, inferential, and temporal connectives

	P	Q	$P \wedge Q$	$P \text{ CAUSE } Q$	$Q \text{ CAUSE } P$
<i>Parce que</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓
<i>Donc</i>	✓	◇		◇	
<i>Et</i>	✓	✓	✓	◇	

interpretations such as in (57), which reproduces the main results of the semantics of causal, inferential, and temporal connectives? Note that if conjunction between propositions is entailed, as well as a causal relation, every connective is defined by a different semantic meaning:

- (57) a. *parce que*  $Q \rightarrow (P \wedge Q) \wedge (Q \text{ CAUSE } P)$   
 b. *donc*  $Q \rightarrow (P \wedge \diamond Q) \wedge \diamond (P \text{ CAUSE } Q)$   
 c. *et*  $Q \rightarrow (P \wedge Q) \wedge \diamond (P \text{ CAUSE } Q)$

These relationships are entailments, or truth-functional implications of utterances, and since they are complex conjunctive propositions, they all imply the truth of the conjuncts, as shown in (58):

- (58) a. *parce que*: (i)  $P \wedge Q$ ; (ii)  $Q \text{ CAUSE } P$   
 b. *donc*: (i)  $P \wedge \diamond Q$ ; (ii)  $\diamond (P \text{ CAUSE } Q)$   
 c. *et*: (i)  $P \wedge Q$ ; (ii)  $\diamond (P \text{ CAUSE } Q)$

Minimal semantic information is based on the conjunction given in (i), which consists of the reduced analysis of (58), as shown in (59):

- (59) a. *parce que*: (i)  $P$ ; (ii)  $Q$   
 b. *donc*: (i)  $P$ ; (ii)  $\diamond Q$   
 c. *et*: (i)  $P$ ; (ii)  $Q$

Hence, from a truth-functional point of view, *parce que* and *et* are *factive* connectives: They both claim the truth of their conjuncts. As shown in Sect. 3, however, *donc* is not a factive connective. When  $P$  is true,  $Q$  can be either true or false.  $\diamond Q$  is therefore not an entailment, but a *conventional implicature*, or a non-truth-functional aspect of meaning.

The status of the second complex causal proposition given in (58); that is, the causal relationship reproduced in (60), must now be investigated:

- (60) a. *parce que*:  $Q \text{ CAUSE } P$   
 b. *donc*:  $\diamond (P \text{ CAUSE } Q)$   
 c. *et*:  $\diamond (P \text{ CAUSE } Q)$

It can be seen that the directional causal relationship is forward for *donc* and *et*, that their causal reading is the only *possible* one, and that it presupposes a condition on the cause. The cause must be a *state* for *donc* and an *event* for *et*. This information is therefore not truth-functional, and cannot be an entailment. Since *donc* can be given another reading, the inferential reading in which the possible causal relationship is backward  $\diamond (Q \text{ CAUSE } P)$ ,<sup>8</sup> (60b) cannot be a conventional implicature.<sup>9</sup> If  $\diamond (P \text{ CAUSE } Q)$  is not a conventional implicature, it must then be a *generalized conversational implicature*, since the contents of the causal relationship do not contribute to the truth-conditional meaning of the discourse, and can be cancelled out.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> As in *Jean est tombé, donc Marie l'a poussé* "John fell; therefore, Mary pushed him."

<sup>9</sup> It should be recalled that conventional implicatures are detachable, conventional, and non-cancellable (Grice 1975; Sadock 1978).

<sup>10</sup> See Moeschler (2013) for a truth-conditional account of entailment, presupposition, implicatures and explicatures.

**Table 5** Truth-functional and non-truth-functional aspects of meaning triggered by *parce que*, *donc*, and *et*

	Entailments		Implicatures		Explicatures
			Conventional	Conversational	
<i>Parce que</i>	P	Q			Q CAUSE P
<i>Donc</i>	P		$\diamond Q$	$\diamond(P \text{ CAUSE } Q)$	
<i>Et</i>	P	Q		$\diamond(P \text{ CAUSE } Q)$	$P < Q$

The last crucial point to be defined is the status of (60a). The direction of the causal relationship can be altered in epistemic use ( $P \text{ CAUSE } Q$ ), which shows that ( $Q \text{ CAUSE } P$ ) cannot be a conventional implicature. Since  $P$  and  $Q$  are factive, they contribute to the truth condition of the utterance. Therefore ( $Q \text{ CAUSE } P$ ) is an *explicature* of causal discourse.<sup>11</sup>

Table 5 sums up the semantic and pragmatic properties of simple and complex propositions triggered by *parce que*, *donc*, and *et*.

## 6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that one way of ensuring an assertion to be acceptable is to give an argument supporting it. I then defended the hypothesis that one of the most efficient ways to connect an argument with its conclusion is by means of a connective which gives precise instructions on how an argument can support a conclusion. As an illustration, I introduced a contrastive analysis of three French connectives, *parce que*, *donc*, and *et*. This comparison led to the conclusion that even if they share some aspect of meaning, mainly a causal one, they do not trigger the same inferences. Entailments, implicatures (conventional and generalized conversational ones), as well as explicatures are ways of expressing their procedural meanings. On the other hand, the causal operator (CAUSE) appearing at different levels of meaning (explicature and implicature) triggers a conceptual meaning. In addition, I gave an argument connecting causality to argumentation.

This study has, as its main result, the introduction of new research questions: How do different types of semantic and pragmatic inferences compose the procedural meanings of connectives? How proximate or remote are connectives relative to these meanings? For instance, are the concessive connectives *mais* (“but”), *pour-tant* (“however”), *bien que* (“although”) connected to causal and inferential ones, and if so, how and why? Are these issues specific to certain types of languages, or are there some general semantic and pragmatic principles attached to the procedural meaning of connectives?

Of course, this analysis of French connectives gives rise to a more general question: If there are semantic and pragmatic differences in the way a specific

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Carston (2002), and Soria and Romero (2010) for extensive discussions on explicatures.

language such as French organizes the trade-off between conceptual and procedural meanings, how can we explain that, as regards proximate connectives, other natural languages succeed in encoding conceptual and procedural information? This question can be answered from two perspectives. The first one, theoretical, predicts that different types of content can be encoded at different levels of meaning. For instance, as regards tenses, a comparative study using parallel corpora has given rise to predictions and verifications about how French and English encode different and similar conceptual and procedural meaning (see Grisot and Moeschler 2014 for a general argumentation), based on a Reichenbachian semantics of tenses and a pragmatic model of tenses pragmatics. The second possible answer is more empirical: How can comparative studies about proximate connectives (such as causal ones) provide new information about the semantics and pragmatics of connectives? Such studies are now getting more numerous, and new empirical results, as shown, for instance, in Zufferey and Cartoni (2012) for causal connectives, strengthen the hypothesis of basic featural meanings being encoded differently from language to language, as well as at different semantic and pragmatic levels (for instance, at the conceptual and procedural levels).

## Annex A: Distribution of *parce que* in the consequence–cause

**Table A.1** Series 1: Causal discourses with a causal connective (*parce que*)

Causal readings		Consequence (E1)	
Cause (E2)		State	Event
	State	<i>Marie ne peut pas boire d'alcool parce qu'elle est mineure.</i> “Mary cannot drink alcohol because she is a minor”	<i>Le médecin soigne Axel parce qu'il est malade.</i> “The doctor is treating Axel because he is ill”
	Event	<i>Axel est malade parce qu'il a trop mangé.</i> “Axel is ill because he ate too much”	<i>Jean est tombé parce que Marie l'a poussé.</i> “John fell down because Mary pushed him”

**Table A.2** Series 2: Reverse discourses with *parce que*

Inferential readings		Consequence (E2)	
Cause (E1)		State	Event
	State	<i>Marie est mineure, parce qu'elle ne peut pas boire d'alcool.</i> “Mary is a minor, because she cannot drink alcohol”	<i>Axel est malade, parce que le médecin le soigne.</i> “Axel is ill, because the doctor is treating him”
	Event	<i>Axel a trop mangé, parce qu'il est malade.</i> “Axel ate too much, because he is ill”	<i>Marie a poussé Jean, parce qu'il est tombé.</i> “Mary pushed John, because he fell down”

## Annex B: Distribution of *donc* and *et* in cause–consequence and consequence–cause order

**Table A.3** Series 3: Reverse discourses with *donc*

Causal or inferential readings (#)		Consequence (E2)	
Cause (E1)		State	Event
	State	<i>Marie est mineure, donc elle ne peut pas boire d'alcool.</i> “Mary is a minor, therefore she cannot drink alcohol”	<i>Axel est malade, donc le médecin le soigne.</i> “Axel is ill, therefore the doctor is treating him”
	Event	<i>#Axel a trop mangé, donc il est malade.</i> “Axel ate too much, therefore he is ill”	<i>#Marie a poussé Jean, donc il est tombé.</i> “Mary pushed John, therefore he fell down”

**Table A.4** Series 4: Reverse discourses with *et*

Causal and inferential readings (#)		Consequence (E2)	
Cause (E1)		State	Event
	State	<i>#Marie est mineure, et elle ne peut pas boire d'alcool.</i> “Mary is a minor, and she cannot drink alcohol”	<i>? Axel est malade, et le médecin le soigne.</i> “Axel is ill, and the doctor is treating him”
	Event	<i>Axel a trop mangé, et il est malade.</i> “Axel ate too much, and he is ill”	<i>Marie a poussé Jean, et il est tombé.</i> “Mary pushed John, and he fell down”

**Table A.5** Series 5: Non-reverse discourses with *donc* and *et*

Inferential readings		Consequence (E1)	
Cause (E2)		State	Event
	State	<i>Marie ne peut pas boire d'alcool, donc/??et elle est mineure.</i> “Mary cannot drink alcohol, therefore/and she is a minor”	<i>Le médecin soigne Axel, donc/??et il est malade.</i> “The doctor is treating Axel, therefore/and he is ill”
	Event	<i>Axel est malade, donc/??et il a trop mangé.</i> “Axel is ill, therefore/and he ate too much”	<i>Jean est tombé, donc/??et Marie l'a poussé.</i> “John fell down, therefore/and Mary pushed him”

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# Some Reflections on the Origin of Reason Through an Outline of the Genealogy of Language in the Light of Homonymity, Analogy, and Metaphor

Ole Fogh Kirkeby

**Abstract** The origin of reason through an outline of the genealogy of language in the light of homonymity, analogy, and metaphor.

In this chapter, I try to show that reason as a cognitive capacity primarily functions through the use of homonyms. The argument is based on the fact that experience is created through the chiasmic interrelation between world and body-mind as it is documented by the historical precedence of the verb in relation to the substantive. This creative *modus operandi* invests the mind with a catalogue of virtual aspects of sense incorporated in the word complex which represents them centered in the root. Thus, a Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root like “\**ghabh-*” contains the double sense of “to hold,” which is either to take, and grasp, or to give and yield. This metaphorical core sense—probably inferred from the hand, since *gabhasti* means “hand” or “forearm” in Sanskrit—produces other aspects of sense like “begivenhed” in Danish, meaning “event,” and also “habit,” the way to “have,” or to accommodate oneself to the occurrences in life. What I claim is that reason is the capacity to understand and hence by meta-reflection to choose deliberately between such senses, in particular relating to their value basis, because reason also is involved as their principle of origin—*qua* practical reason—through which this metaphorical richness was originally coined. These principles of construction and deconstruction may also be applied to the analysis of reason itself since it also has a homonymic basis in the metaphors of air and light.

**Keywords** Homonymity · Analogy · Metaphor · Societal pragmatics

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## 1 Introduction

In light of the severe problems haunting this planet, in particular the ones connected to the words “sustainability” and “resilience,” it is of immense importance to be aware of the ways in which we think in order to be able to act properly. Thinking was already defined by Plato as the dialogue of the soul with itself; hence, it involves the contribution of a meta-function. Since his times, this function was called “logos” in Greek and “ratio” in Latin. Rationality, however, does not have one single appearance. There are, in fact, more kinds of rationality. The question about which one will dominate might implicate the answer about the fate of this planet. In this perspective, it is pertinent to understand the essence of rationality, and this means to analyze its genealogy. This, of course, coincides with the analysis of the origin of words in general. Since the word originated in the verb, it originated in processes, in social relations with the world. The phenomenon of sense grows out of the ways in which the core of images and ideas manifested and created through the interaction with the world are transformed in the capacity of metaphors into the homonymic basis of abstract concepts.

The present chapter contributes to the understanding of the role of homonyms in forming the fundament of thinking and hence, in particular, shaping the practical references of the different concepts of reason, the choice of which shall decide the fate of our world. In other words, we must be able to imagine a reason of “generous becoming” the consequences of which are a practice that aims at saving both nature and humanity.

## 2 Exordium

According to Arrian’s *Discourses*, Epictetus corroborates the idea that reason must be a function of perception in his reflections on the “self-contemplative” (*aútes theoretiké*) character of reason (“logos”) in the following way:

Every art and faculty makes certain things the special object of its contemplation. Now when the art or faculty itself is of like kind with what it contemplates, it becomes inevitably self-contemplative; but when it is of unlike kind, it cannot contemplate itself. For example, the art of leatherworking has to do with hides, but the art itself is altogether different from the material of hides, wherefore it is not self-contemplative. Again, the art of grammar has to do with written speech; it is not therefore, also itself written speech, is it? Not at all. For this reason it cannot contemplate itself. Well then, for what purpose have we received reason from nature? For the proper use of internal impressions. What then, is reason itself? Something composed (*sístēma*) out of a certain kind of external impressions (*phantasiōn*). (Epictetus 1946/1995, p. 137)

Epictetus’ argument is that the only phenomenon which is able to relate to itself through self-reflection is the mental impression, *qua impressions*. Thus, reason is a function of mental impressions. But this is only possible because “logos” is developed as the way impressions relate to impressions. Since “reason” originates in Latin “ratio” and “ratio” is a translation of the Greek “logos,” and “logos” means both thinking and speaking, the primary relation of impressions to impressions is the word.

Considering that it is the word that makes proprioception manifest as internal experience, using the word produces the capacity to distinguish and discriminate (*diakrinein*) between those impressions that do, and those that do not, consolidate the relation of the self to itself. Hence, we could claim that reason grows out of self-preservation, a movement which finally leads to character formation and the possibility of ethics, insofar as the context of “*conservatio sui*” is the social. Interpreting Epictetus, we can elaborate his argument as implying the following thesis: that reason must be related to the way that the “arts,” which cannot draw upon an identity of substance between the mental and practical processes involved in their activity, relate to themselves. In other words, reason is the meta-function par excellence of symbolic relation, and this relation would not be possible if it were not established by a shared substance, namely perception as practice. Perception makes it possible for reason to identify with every specific practice, and also to establish its own individual matter, and this matter is a potential medium of generality.<sup>1</sup> Since the Greeks, it has been called “thought” (*noûs*) as an abstract function, and “*dóxa*” and “*éndoza*,” respectively, with reference to its content in relation to the tension between common sense and a higher level of experience and erudition.

In this light, the Greeks’ concept of sense data, “*phántasma*,” makes sense, since in creating knowledge, we produce an essence (“*ousía*”). “*Ousía*” resonates with the original meaning of the word “*noúmenon*,” namely “that which is perceived” (contrary to Kant’s use), a neuter passive present participle of “*nóein*,” “to perceive or understand.”

For now, it shall suffice to speak of a “general matter of reason” and not specify it through the canonical concepts of the tradition, i.e., theoretical and practical philosophy, ontology, epistemology, physics, logic, ethics, politics, semantics, rhetoric, etc., or more idiomatically through distinctions between natural science and humanities, linear and nonlinear scientific models, etc.

However, neither perception of the external and internal worlds nor the capacity to synthesize them is enough to explain the mechanism of reason. The function of reason must be shaped by the capacity to generalize through a third medium, sound, and hence, words, and through a supplementary activity, the power of using homonymy.<sup>2</sup> In terms of the capacity for language, I shall go so far as to stipulate that the capacity to form homonyms represents the genus with respect to shaping analogies and metaphors, which represent the species.

I shall approach the hypothesis just presented in stages. First, I present a theory of the genealogy of language, then a theory of its transcendental basis (in the Kantian sense of homonymy), and finally, I develop an outline of the conceptual history of reason.

<sup>1</sup> John Dewey suggested this line of thinking in his pragmatic epistemology by defining the essence of perception as aesthetic (Dewey 2005). The German philosopher Ernst Cassirer (Cassirer 1923) was another important exponent of this paradigm.

<sup>2</sup> J. G. Herder must probably be credited with shaping the idea that conceptualization is a function of the metaphorical use of perception. Like Locke, Herder saw sensation as producing all our concepts, but explained the abstract and nonempirical concept as the product of the capacity to create homonyms (Herder 2002).

### 3 An Attempt at Describing the Genealogy of Language

Wording originates in an event, because everything that exists under the rule of time happens in an event.<sup>3</sup> But the event of language as wording is always more than just the simple result of expressing an impression, it has a—be it ever so slight—meta-aspect to it. Every practice has a reflective inertia built into it as a result of the need and desire to distinguish oneself from, and to identify oneself with, the world. This inertia stems from the fact that every practice is bound to an individual body and always displaced in time, since expressing the impression cannot be a simultaneous event. *This phenomenon could be named practical reflectivity.*<sup>4</sup>

It is possible to distinguish five main types of wording as they proceed from existence:

1. One arising from an individual's relation to material things and processes—e.g., the word “event” is shaped through Latin “venire” from the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root “\*gwa-,” also producing “venue” transferred from Old French in the early fourteenth century, “a coming for the purpose of attack.” An event contains a sense of threat, possible catastrophe, fatality, ultimate decision, and, of course, desired outcome.
2. One arising from an individual's relation to other human beings—e.g., the word “free” is formed by the PIE root “\*prijos-,” “dear, beloved,” perhaps also “protected by one's kinsmen (“frænde” in Danish).”<sup>5</sup> It is related to “friend,” and in Danish to the word for “peace, “fred,” and to the goddess of love and marriage “Frigg.”
3. One transferring this wording to an inner, mental relation by homonymity—e.g., the word “elevated” comes to mean more than merely being physically lifted up.

<sup>3</sup> Jacob L. Mey suggested the concept “wording” many years ago: “By ‘wording’ I will understand the process through which human beings enter the world by their use of language” (Mey 1985, p. 166).

<sup>4</sup> It is remarkable that two of the most powerful theories of language from the last century, the one of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the one of Ludwig Wittgenstein, presuppose that language is a function of expression, thus abstracting from the concept of language as “synthetic” in Aristotle's sense, as a contingent system in relation to semantic genealogy. Only the Stoics tried to seriously counter this view, despite the fact that their grammatical masterpieces that often strayed into onomatopoeic fantasies. However, in “Cratylus,” Plato anticipated the critique of the “*synthéké*” which would become the trademark of Saussure's theory. Merleau-Ponty developed his thoughts on the origin of language based on his deep knowledge of child psychology; Wittgenstein's casual remarks probably just intended to escape the label theory, which haunted him. The expression theory of language is, of course, rather banal, and impossible to corroborate, open to various perverse sorts of the *petitio principii*. It is worth noticing that at the time of its foundation in 1866, the Paris Linguistic Society in 1866 banned the discussions of the origin of language. I shall pursue it anyhow.

<sup>5</sup> In this and the following etymological presentations, I shall generally use: Klein, Ernest. 1971. *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*. Amsterdam: Elsevier; *The Oxford English Dictionary* 1989. 2nd ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press; Watkins, Calvert, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of Indo-European Roots* 2000. 2nd ed., Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.; Barnhart, Robert K., ed. 1988. *Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology*. H.W. Wilson Co.; and especially the *Online Etymology Dictionary* 2001. New York: Douglas Harper.

4. One transferring a wording developed from the interaction with material things to other relations to material things—e.g., “forests of masts”.
5. One transferring a relation from the inner, mental scene to a relation with material things—e.g., “his thinking was razor-like” (the inverse trope: “the razor was as sharp as a thought” is meant to express something different because “thought” could be replaced by many other metaphorical terms, “flash,” for example).

Probably, all of these different uses of words are the result of one effort by one individual in one event. Of course, they need to be received and accepted by others in order to become part of a “language game.” Perhaps such development of language games must be preceded by “games of experience,” and maybe this is why some writers on the origin of language presume that corporeal movement like dancing, humming, and in particular, singing shaped the beginnings of language. It is also probable that gestures, in combination with more or less codified exclamations that functioned as coordinating signs during hunt and combat also were a precondition of language, as Friedrich Engels thought. However, giving emotion an essential role in the development of the semantic, and indeed, any reference to the tonal or harmonic dimension of language as a foundation of semantics, raises insurmountable problems (not least, “begging the question”) and probably leads into neurolinguistics.

I would never claim that wording has an onomatopoeic origin in general, since few “things” speak. Neither would I claim that speech arises from the sounds produced by interaction with things, for our gestures per se, including dance and music, would merely constitute a coarse “body language” compared to the richness of the PIE language. Also, our emotions need the social dimension in order to be able to answer to anything more than an extremely simplistic semantics. One must be satisfied by accepting that the development of language and of the social dimension have a chiastic relationship.<sup>6</sup>

So, what I attempt is only to depict a structural relation between sound, sense, and self as a propaedeutic draft for understanding the reflective capacity of reason. This capacity originates in the verb as the essence of relating and of being related, because it is this activity that makes meta-functions of different orders possible. It must be evident that homonymy is a product of relating.

When wording arises from the individual’s experience with things, this process demands listening to oneself, and, no doubt, listening to oneself speaking aloud. These vocalized sounds must be founded both in our physiology and in our mental qualities. I previously named this process of speaking aloud to oneself “auto-onomatopoesis,” or “self-mimesis” (Kirkeby 2010).<sup>7</sup> At a later stage of linguistic

<sup>6</sup> In placing the metaphor in the center of epistemology, the opus of Hans Blumenberg stands out. Important translations are (Blumenberg 1996, 2010). One must also give credit to G. Lakoff and M. Johnson for having examined the relation between the development of a primitive vocabulary of the environment and the metaphorical function of language as a means to structure both our perception and understanding, as early as in the 1980s (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff and Johnson 1999).

<sup>7</sup> In classical Greek, the compound word “*onomatopoeia*” means “making or creating names.” Hence, they used a different word to refer to imitating sounds, namely “*echomimesis*.”

development, one can refer to another term I have introduced, “translocutionarity” (Kirkeby 1994), which deals with the relation between thinking and speaking. Translocutionarity could be expressed in the phrase: “I do not know what I mean until I hear what I am saying.” We might, of course, supplement this relation with oneself with the great influence of a potential listener on one’s own calibrating and even understanding of the sense to be expressed; however, the outside listener does not constitute the primary epistemological relation between thought and word, even if all speech could be defined as virtual communication. In principle, all speech presents a person to himself, for better or worse.

If the event is the critical stage for wording, this implies reflectivity. This can be deduced from the fact that repetition is the mechanism for both conservation and diffusion of sense, because repetition presupposes the identification of sameness in relation to the event. But the transfer of sense from relations to external beings, things or people, to the phenomena of our internal world of consciousness demands preparation at the mental level to receive this transfer by homonymy (analogy or metaphor). If this were not the case, every example of the transfer of sense would be not only a construction of sense but a construction of functions in the mental realm as well.

However, the sense of identity could not be a mere construction unless it was nothing more than a projection of our experience with our own body. This would make it impossible to understand the phenomenon of consciousness, suggesting that consciousness was a bodily essence relating to a bodily essence (and not a relation relating to a relation), which would distinguish consciousness from all other relations between material bodies only by virtue of its occupying the same place—something physically impossible. Among other implications, this would mean that we would have to infer our own motives from our way of acting, which is something we do not do. It is the other way around, we investigate what we feel and relate by the norms of relevance.

Even if we consider that the word “identity,” meaning “sameness, oneness,” stems from Late Latin “*identitas*” by using Latin “*idem*,” “the same,” it originates in the form “*identidem*,” “over and over,” as used in the phrase “*idem et idem*,” which implies that such sameness must be unfolded in time through repetition. Hence, this sameness cannot be found in the relation as such, but needs an anchor point, an “*ipse*” to rule the “*idem*” as Paul Ricoeur noted (Ricoeur 1992). At a minimum, this anchor point must be the reflective function in the grammatical sense as constituted by the relation between the reflexive pronoun of the first and third person, the latter being able to refer back to the subject of a sentence or to the speaker’s social group (“we ourselves”).

The central concept in classical Greek philosophy, “*éthos*,” meaning “character, nature, moral attitude, disposition and habit,” consequently stems from a suffixed form of PIE root “*s(w)e-*,” “\**swed-yo-*,” which also has the function as a reflexive pronoun (in Danish “sig”). Hegel’s key word “Sitte” for morality in his *Elements of Philosophy of Right* also shares this root. The same root also produces the word “idiom,” whose Greek, verbal form “*idioúmai*,” means “to appropriate to oneself,” from “*idios*,” “personal, private,” compare Latin “*suescere*,” “to accustom, get accustomed.” Thus, Hegel is perfectly right in (more or less implicitly) understanding private property as the engine of social identity.

From a social perspective, the phenomenon of identity is closely related to the possibility of understanding oneself as a self, i.e., as an entity that might be temporarily excluded from the community, or even separate itself by choice. The word “self” also has the same root as “idiom” “\*s(w)e-,” in Proto-Germanic “\*selbaz,” from PIE “\*sel-bho-,” meaning “separate, apart.”

This individuation process can also be observed for the important word “true.” In English, an archaic word for truth is “sooth,” from Proto-Germanic “\*santhaz” (Old High German “sand,” like in modern Danish), from PIE “\*es-ont-,” “being, existence,” thus “real, true,” from the present participle of the root “\*es-.”

The word “sin” has the same root and is thus cognate with Latin “sons,” “guilty,” so this genealogical homonymity can be hypothetically explained by referring to a social process in which a person is pointed out, accepts his guilt and confesses—a process similar to positive self-exclusion. Identity could then be said to be the result of a process in which an individual pleads guilty of being the one he is (*idem plus ipse*).

An argument for the reality of a mental realm manifested through individual expression could be founded on the factuality of speaking. Since the word “fact” has the PIE root “\*dhe-,” “to put, to do,” language tells us that even if we feel that speaking happens to us, or even if we feel “we are spoken by language,” we remain its authors. Speech is not a mechanical response to the relation to the external world, though it is directed towards it. This is proven by the possibility of refusing to speak, and by the differences between two people’s responses when they are presented with the same event. In this sense, the origin of individual speech is private (a deprivation in relation to collectivity), and as a capacity, it belongs to something covered by words like “I” or “me.” As stated just before the third-person reflexive pronoun that refers back to the subject of a sentence stems from PIE “\*swed-yo-,” a suffixed form of root “\*s(w)e-.” It also produces the Greek word “*idios*” meaning “personal, private.” “Privation” is a category in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* called “*stērēsis*.”

If there were no inner life apart from social relations, an individual could not be other than or more than his acts, and there would be no inner helicopter point of view. As an ethical program, Epictetus expresses this with the word “*eustatheia*,” “steadfastness,” which he defines as follows: “If you wish any good thing, get it from yourself” (Epictetus op. cit. p. 187). The Stoic ideal of total independence from social relations not under one’s control is emphasized here.

Now, the conclusion emerging from these preliminary deliberations is that there are two interconnected processes of wording that dominate the five types mentioned in the beginning of this section. One process stems from our expression of the impression produced by our interaction with the objects in the external world, and the other stems from a far more ambiguous internal world of quasi-objects, images, and significances. These two worlds are combined via auto-onomatopoeisis by virtue of homonymity, analogy, and metaphor, but without two distinct worlds, these three phenomena could not be epistemologically possible.

What I have claimed here is in direct opposition to Locke’s concept of language as a functional, but arbitrary system of signs, derived from Aristotle (“*synthēkē*”). Locke writes

1. Words are sensible signs, necessary for communication of ideas... The comfort and advantage of society not being to be had without communication of thoughts, it was necessary that man should find out some external sensible signs, whereof those invisible ideas, which his thoughts are made up of, might be made known to others. For this purpose nothing was so fit, either for plenty or quickness, as those articulate sounds, which with so much ease and variety he found himself able to make. Thus we may conceive how words, which were by nature so well adapted to that purpose, came to be made use of by men as the signs of their ideas; not by any natural connexion that there is between particular articulate sounds and certain ideas, for then there would be but one language amongst all men; but by a voluntary imposition, whereby such a word is made arbitrarily the mark of such an idea. The use, then, of words, is to be sensible marks of ideas; and the ideas they stand for are their proper and immediate signification. (Locke 1999 p. 389)

Of course, we might excuse the weakness of Locke's sole argument for the arbitrariness of words as sounds—that the opposite conception would imply that “there would be but one language amongst all men”—by virtue of the historical fact that by 1690, only Justus Scaliger had proposed the idea of a genealogical relation among languages, even if some missionaries had seen the relation between Sanskrit and Greek, and hence could have cast doubt on the general dogma that God spoke Hebraic.

However, beyond etymology (allow me to recall that in Greek, “*étumon*” is a parallel word to “*alétheia*” meaning “truth,” and that “etymology” began as an epistemological and ontological discipline already at the time of Plato), it is homonymy that provides us with an argument that words, in principle, are not arbitrary. As noted earlier, there must be constitutional forms of anticipatory readiness for receiving figurative significance, mental entities of the semantic, real or virtual, what Locke referred to as “ideas,” using the traditional Greek word in a more liberal sense than Hume in relation to the mental phenomena to which he refers:

whatever is meant by phantasm, notion, species, or whatever it is which the mind can be employed about in thinking;... I presume it will be easily granted me, that there are such ideas in men's minds: every one is conscious of them in himself; and men's words and actions will satisfy him that they are in others. (Locke 1999, p. 27)

And

1. Idea is the object of thinking. Every man being conscious to himself that he thinks; and that which his mind is applied about whilst thinking being the ideas that are there, it is past doubt that men have in their minds several ideas,—such as are those expressed by the words whiteness, hardness, sweetness, thinking, motion, man, elephant, army, drunkenness, and others. (Locke 1999, p. 86)

Reason derives its power from the fact that it is the ruling principle not only of this mental world, but also of its relation to the eternal world. Hence, it is able to prepare for action in the “real” world, not least because it can form the principles and meta-principles of wording (in concept and theories).

Besides their implications for the philosophy of language, this compatibility and similarity between worlds demonstrate that our social practices set the principles for our thinking, but not without conflict between the ruthlessly egocentric and ethnocentric politics of power, and those of identification, empathy and care. This is evidenced on the mental plane by the complex interrelation between “*lógos*” and



“*noûs*” through their metamorphosis into “ratio” and “intellectus,” “Vernunft” and “Verstand” and “reason” and “intellect.” On this journey, *lógos* itself is divided in the form of rationality into an instrumental “*epistémē theoretikē*” on the one hand, and an alternative, embracing and adopting, protective and careful mode of thinking on the other (which could be named “*epistémē epimelē*”).

#### 4 The Realms of Mind and Body and the Function of Homonyms in Bridging Them

If we take the word “to bear” (give birth) in a figurative sense, our experience with creating ideas must exist in some anticipatory form before the physical denotation of the word can be applied to this process. We must select or choose the metaphor, or at least some form of connection has to be found between the experience of the physical process of bearing a child and the meaning of the process of fostering an idea or a concept. This connection must be more structural than the one ascribed to association, because the latter presupposes the former. We must necessarily have an experience of an inner world, a set of games of experience to which the comparison can be matched. The pieces of these games might be images, perhaps followed by some kind of “silent sounds.” The PIE root “\*bher-” means both to give birth and to carry a burden (like in Greek “*phérein*”), and this might be the metaphorical connection.

In his search for ways to express the absolute transcendence of God, Moses Maimonides in his book *The Guide for the Perplexed* (Maimonides 2007) undertakes a meticulous and detailed investigation of the homonyms in the Bible, since making God the subject of immanence presupposes the ascription of qualities to Him. These qualities are developed through homonyms, and the process in which one liberates oneself from his habit is called “*apóphasis*” in Greek, and the overall theological approach the “*theología apophatikē*”—in Greek, grammatically accomplished through the alpha-privative. Among the homonyms Maimonides examines in Part I are: to build (Chap. III), perceive, see (IV), bear (VII), place (VIII), throne (IX), go up, go down (X), be seated (XI), raise up (XII), stand upright, stand by, endure, resist, (XIII), rock (XVI), approach, touch, contact by comprehension (XVIII), fill up, full of, fulfill (XIX), lift up, elevate (XX), to pass, pass over, above (\**pat-no*, in PIE “to pass”), which figuratively denoted the appearance of the “Light and the Divine Presence...” (“*shekhinah*” in Hebrew, XXI), come, appear, happen (XXII), spread (XXIV), dwell, stay, (XXV), eat, devour, use up (XXX), water, drink (wisdom; XXXIV), face, anger, attention (“May the Lord make his face to shine upon you”; XXXVII), heart, thought, advice (XXXIX), air, breath, intention, spirit, soul (“*ruah*” in Hebrew XL).

While it is very difficult to answer the question—and impossible to verify the results—whether an original connection could be found between the sounds of these words and their figurative sense, another hypothesis is easier to approach: In order for the bodily position of standing upright, for example, to take on a mental sense of

being faithful to one's principles, we must have developed some, be it ever so faint, notion of inner stability. The PIE root of "stand" is "*\*sta-*," which gives "*stásis*" in Greek and both "steadfast" and "assist" in English. Once more, to be able to transfer the experience of sun- and daylight into a concept of being mentally enlightened, we must have had some prior experience with an inner light. In order to speak figuratively of drinking from the fountain of knowledge, for example, we must possess an experience of both mental thirst and fluidity or "flow" (compare the important concept of "*eúroia bíou*" in Stoic philosophy).

Consequently, the transcendental condition for creating homonyms, analogies, and metaphors must be a set of distinct mental ideas, perhaps corresponding to original PIE words. Such ideas would most probably have a character of vagueness in order to create the need for concretization through comparison with material phenomena of daily life. These ideas could be images or even words, but for all that, they are marked by a readiness for sense and signification that exists in our body/mind in the form of a capacity for incorporating and communicating sense. I shall call them blotches of sense, because their "surface" reveals degrees of intensity and clarity, before they take on the symbolic materiality of an image or a concept. Since they are "syn-kin-aesthetic" in character, they have huge malleability. They are linked to proprioception as well as a figurative, purely mental form of proprioception. Sight definitely dominates the majority of homonyms, in part because they are bound up with the capacity to move and, hence, to estimation of distance, but this capacity is felt as a state and possibility of the body/mind. This is corroborated by the closeness of the PIE roots for mind and hand, "*\*men-*," and "*\*man-*," and by the role of the touch in creating metaphors for understanding. It is a fact of existence that our mind does not have objects per se other than the ones imported from without. But this does not exclude our having such blotches of capacity for sense already imparted to us by our practice.

The semantic blotches are translatable into images yielded by the phenomena of the external world, images that once again can be translated into other images. Since these images qua ideas are also simultaneously expressible in sounds, they can be transformed through individual and collective repetition into words, hence creating the possibility of homonymity. In order not to produce a *circulus vitiosus*, we must presuppose that the realization of these blotches of sense through words is anticipated by wording produced in our interaction with the world; they do not generate sounds themselves.

However, such semantic blotches must not be confused with "ideas" in Locke's sense, because ideas are understood as "determinate ideas," an idea being conceived

such as it is at any time objectively in the mind, and so determined there, it is annexed, and without variation determined, to a name or articulate sound, which is to be steadily the sign of that very same object of the mind, or determinate idea. (Locke p. 19 ff.)

Nor do semantic blotches (unlike Locke's "ideas," when he speaks about "the mind's view" and what "it sees in itself") presuppose, in a rather "Husserlian way", that pure consciousness is able to constitute them. Semantic blotches do not imply that words, as the product of interacting with the world, and thus—using a much later expression—"doing things with words," can be ignored (this criticism is not an anachronism, since the Stoics did not make this error in their theory of language).

It is probably this demand for precision, beyond the obvious commonsense conclusion, that led Locke to the illusion, shared by so many other philosophers, that the object was the primary essence of the human fabric of the world. However, the verb was primary to the substantive in the genealogy of language.

The late linguist Calvert Watkins notes in his article about PIE that:

The names for a number of different trees are widely enough attested to be viewed as Proto-Indo-European in date. The general term for “tree” and “wood” was “*deru-*”. The original meaning of the root was doubtless “to be firm, solid”, and from it is derived not only the family of English TREE but also that of English TRUE. Note that the semantic evolution has here been from the general to the particular, from “solid” to “tree” (and even “oak” in some dialects), and not the other way around.

Other, even more convincing examples listed by Watkins are that “*okw-*,” “to see,” produces “eye,” (Latin *oculus*), and the common Indo-European name of the horse, “*ekwo-*,” is probably derived from the adjective “*ku-*,” “swift,” and the word “wheel,” where the widespread “\**kw(e)-kwl-o-*” is an expressive derivative of a verb (“*kwel-l-*”) meaning “to revolve or go around.” A later word for “wheel” also exhibits this phenomenon, such as Latin “*rota*” from a verbal root “*ret-*,” “to run.”

Of course, this way of imagining the concept of sense is also in accordance with the well-documented, so-called primitive ways of experiencing, as in animism and mimesis.

Thus, the primary origin of words was never deictic. Words only become labels at a much later stage of historical development, during the deliberate development of a scientific vocabulary.

What Locke probably did not know was that he was making an implicit argument for the necessity of homonymity, insofar as the transference of the sense created in our interrelation with material objects in a social context onto a figurative realm, somehow designed to receive them, provides the needed determination of our own mentally secluded, vaguely articulated, and emotionally shaped semantic entities. Thus, a linguistic practice created through the self-mimesis of our relation with the material world furnishes the mind’s virtual semantic space with manifest content. This content can then be treated in a “world-like” way, as if the objects of consciousness were real objects, emphasizing the intense similarity between practical action and contemplative thinking. Thus, the argument is that to the extent that the wording of our interrelation with objects and organisms is not arbitrary, neither are the “labels” of our mental ideas.

Through its capacity of repetition, the word as a phenomenon testifies to the existence of—what could be called—“an alphabet of core senses” characterizing our games of experience. Hence, to prepare a defense, to ponder on a plan, to construct a castle or a theory, are all concrete complexes of images and sense that are subsumable under the concept of “building.” However, none of them could be seen in isolation as the author of this core sense. This would form a counterargument against the strong version of constructionism, since the core sense as an abstraction (“aphaeresis”) or generalization presupposes the—so to speak—“sense of sense.”

However, the differentiated character of homonyms fashioned over the same semantic theme suggests the existence of a core sense from another angle.

Take the material “sand;” it has wide metaphorical use. In Blake, for example, it is the metaphor of the innumerable and the infinite, and it is also used to signify the lack of a basis in life, and the merciless flow of time when it runs through our fingers. We can ask: What criterion determines when sand exemplifies one or the other of these possibilities?

If such a criterion is lacking, we cannot adequately explain why and when sand as a material should produce these different conceptions in the mind. This observation points to the fact that these conceptions must exist beforehand, so to speak.

However, if we think about a conception of the innumerable and the infinite existing beforehand, it is easier to isolate contextual factors, explaining why drops of water or grains of corn might substitute for sand here. Sand is barren, while water can mirror and merge, and corn, related to Latin “*crescere*,” “to grow,” (PIE root “\*ker-”), has its secret relation to the goddess Ceres and to the underworld and, hence, to the cycle of life and death (some people even eat croissants for breakfast).

Building and sitting dwell in the arms and the lower part of the back, and the elevated position on the throne is felt as an inner hovering. Approaching, coming closer, being acquainted with, come to know, are powerful emotions of familiarity, intimacy, and confidence. They might be substituted with concepts of expropriation, usurpation, seduction, or hunting (like in Nicolas Cusanus’ famous essay *De venatione sapientiae*), because the process of acquiring knowledge of a subject is often difficult, exhausting, challenging, exciting, but also strengthening. However, exactly which practice, or which mixture of them, produces the core sense cannot be predicted.

If we ask the hypothetical question whether we would have had the possibility of understanding the sense of building, sitting, and spreading out without a reference to the external world, this appears empty. However, experiences with frames for the social context need to be taken into consideration. This applies in general, because the higher position yields adequate protection and the possibility of striking back, and with respect to institutions like the royal and religious power in particular, providing the sense of sitting on the throne, of being elevated, and untouchable.

## 5 Auto-onomatopoesis, Logos, and the Metaphors of Sound and Light

Let me sum up. The mind has the quality of functioning as a subject and an object at the same time. It is able to reflect upon itself in the capacity of itself. This twofold function might be seen as both a power and a destiny, since it presupposes a distance or even crack in the core of consciousness. However, the optical mirror metaphor behind the reflective capacity can only be installed as the phenomenon of thinking if thought can incorporate it into language. The reason for this is that to duplicate an image in the mind in response to the reflective effort requires replication in another medium, and that “inner sound” is the only candidate here.

The distinction between “*poiein*” and “*páskhein*” in Plato’s terminology, between acting and suffering, could very well be seen as the original, epistemic distinction which creates the phenomenon of reflection and, consequently, the phenomenon of language. This is due to the fact that mental images, whether in the capacity of products of perception or fantasy, are “suffered,” while their representations through the reflective effort are the result of a creation. Thus, the symbol and the homonym can already be seen as internal, mental signs, even before they are communicated.

The explanation of why the relation between “*poiein*” and “*páskhein*” refers to the series of events in which sense came to include the hypothesis that man primarily relates to the world as if it were a dynamic, processing whole, a state of forces, and not a context of objects proper. Thus, sense is the product of the way we refer to our experiences of interaction with the world in the capacity of assemblies of phenomena which are not just organic but very much alive. Language arises from the articulation of these relations. Sense is the mode in which the impression that our interaction with the world effectuates upon our body is articulated as an emotional state that aspires to mutate reciprocally from image to inner speech. This *conditio humana* is corroborated by the understanding from linguistic science that the verb was prior to the substantive.

This is of utter importance from the perspective of philosophy, because it reveals the twofold origin of the concept of “transcendence.” Namely, both the inner sense core of external nature and the inner sense core of our own mind are inaccessible and, hence, impossible to address with the very words that conceal, or shall one say “guard,” their secret. We cannot decipher why the interaction with the world produces exactly this sound, this significance, or this flavor of sense. Such factuality indicates the relevance of a methodological perspective which might be named “*sémasiología apophatiké*” parallel to “*theología apophatiké*” or “*theologia negativa*,”<sup>8</sup> the principle of which is the negative dialectic or “*via negationis*.” Kant’s transcendental reduction is probably the most famous modern example of an apophatic procedure in philosophy, since the conceptual framework answers the question about that which is absolutely necessary to assume for experience to be real. The capacity of reason (*lógos*) to combine “*apóphasis*” and “*katáphasis*” in a dialectic movement is demonstrated here.

The Greek word “*lógos*” is derived from “*légein*,” a word with many related meanings, including to collect, to speak, to count, to think, to tell, to read, to place before one, to show, to unfold. We can understand how “*lógos*,” in its capacity as the meta-concept of thinking, covered both receptive and productive aspects by investigating the etymology of “seeing” and “saying.” We discover that “to see” probably stems from the same base that produced words for “say” in Greek and Latin, and also words for “follow” (cf. Latin “*sequor*”); “say” is from PIE “\**sokei-*,” probably from base “\**seq-*,” “point out”; and so is “sequel.” Thus, “to see” might originally mean “follow with the eyes,” indicating a sequential movement. “Sequel” originates from PIE base “\**sekw-*,” “to see.” Sight probably has a discursive structure parallel to language because it is subject to time (states perceived in a glimpse are not identical).

<sup>8</sup> “theologia” is the same word in Greek and Latin.

From the time of the Greeks, thinking meant to devote oneself to the *logos*, and this presupposed opening oneself to a source of light, which might come from without or from within. In St. John, “*lógos*” even creates the world, and Baroque thinkers legitimized the concept of human rights as the foundation of a new political order through the concept of “*lux rationis*,” the light of reason—and, as we shall see, reason is based on a Latin translation of *lógos* into “*ratio*.”

For Baroque thinkers, the phenomenon of vision might result from the words of a god appearing inside one’s head, an epiphany. This word “vision” shows the close connection between seeing and knowing, which is prepared in the twin relation of saying and seeing: In English, “vision” originally meant “something seen in the imagination,” from Latin “*videre*,” “to see,” from PIE base “\**weid-*,” “to know, to see” (compare Danish “at *vide*.”)

“To know” origins in Old English “*cnawan*,” “to know,” or “perceive,” from PIE root “\**gno-*,” “to know” (Latin “*gnoscerere*,” “*cognoscere*,” Greek “*gignóskhein*,” German “*wissen*,” “*kennen*,”). Philosophical terms like “cognition” and “Gnosis,” “Gnosticism,” also have this root, which combined the sense of seeing or perceiving with that of speaking. This is demonstrated by the fact that “to narrate” shares this root too. To know presupposes to have seen or heard and, hence, to be able to articulate.

Words such as understand, observe, and adhere are, like know, syntheses of seeing and hearing effectuated by the capacity to move, Greek “*kínein*,” and to touch, “*háptein*,” Latin “*tangere*.” The words “experience” and “interpret” both contain the “super-movement” root in PIE “\**per-*,” also producing the words related to “practice.” Kinesthesia and proprioception or *koenesthesia* are bodily frames for thinking and, thus, presuppose activity.

Consequently, as the meta-capacity of reflection that results in thinking, reason is firmly rooted in perception and practice, since its homonymic content is seeing and saying/listening.

The fundamental relation between saying and seeing is revealed by the mental fact that the basic form of thought is inner dialogue, in its intermittent shifts to inner monologue, a fact so often emphasized by Plato. The question about the essence of reason thus becomes the question of the identity and legitimacy of “the one(s)” inside our mind talking.

This question has its analogies in the history of Indo-European religion. The etymological connections cited above, between saying and knowing on the one side and seeing on the other, correspond with the ambiguous concept of “god” in Indo-European culture. There seems to be a chiasmic relation between the word and the light, as stated in the beginning of St. John, and already manifested in the burning bush and in the “JHWH.” After all, seeing and listening can only address the signs of a deeper sense, not its signification, since it is God who guards the secret of sense. Here, the auditory domain is given pronounced priority, since voice is a more effective cover than the face (this corresponds on the human side to the religious sense of “shame” and to goddesses like *Aidōs*).

Likewise, our own identities are small, profane copies of the JHWH, since we cannot locate, and hence express, our own identity as authors of our inner speech. So apperception opens the door to a deeper experience, but at the same time, it also

closes that door. This is also the fate of reason in the capacity of inner voice: It cannot find itself. This might explain why “to think” has the same PIE root as “to thank,” “\*-*tong*,” and also why there is no science of intuition.

In the same way that light is the condition of the mental image, and hence of intuition, sound is the condition of discursive thinking, but true knowledge can transcend the perception which makes it possible. Plato expresses this idea in *Timaeus* (29B), where he seems to presuppose that thought is able to understand the essence of the cosmos, because it is operating with mechanisms beyond perception. Cosmos is the unfolded product of God’s dialogue with himself in a language, “*lógos*,” which eventually might be revealed to the few.

If we accept the hypothesis that reflection is a product of the mimesis and replication by inner sound of a mental image or an “idea” in Locke’s sense, the interconnection of the metaphors of light and sound are crucial for the cognitive system.

This is corroborated by the observation that in all its connotations of speaking, the concept of *logos* is metaphorically based on breathing, because voice is a product of breath and inner sound its symbolic echo. “*Lógos*” and “spirit” are closely related. “Spirit” means “animating or vital force in man and animals,” from Latin “*spirare*,” “to breathe,” and its substantive “*spiritus*,” “soul, courage, vigor, breath,” with the PIE root “\*(s)*peis-*,” “to blow.” Thus, the Greek “*pneúma*” with the related PIE root “\**pneu-*,” “to breathe,” and which in Stoic philosophy incorporates *logos*’ sense of cosmic principle, is translated into Latin “*spiritus*.” The rare exception from the metaphor of breathing, however, is the Greek “*psukhē*” which, although its root is “\**bhes-*,” to blow or to breathe, is translated into “soul,” a word stemming from Proto-Germanic “\**saiwalo*,” the origin of which is uncertain, but might be related to Proto-Germanic “\**saiwaz*,” “sea.”

Hence, our lack of ability to identify our own authorship of thinking is metaphorically revealed in the word “inspiration” which means an “immediate influence of God or a demon,” especially the inspiration under which the holy books were written; it comes from Latin “*inspirare*,” “inspire, inflame, blow into,” thus sharing the root “*spirare*.” Once again, the basic metaphor is breath, and sound producing is a function of breathing. Consequently, sense must be too, since it relies on reflection.

But how is this presence of spirit in the capacity of inspiration felt? What causes inspiration and how is it prepared and which practice does it relate to? This is important because all fields rely on inspiration for their development, insofar as they are subject to the dogma of invention and innovation.

The presence of spirit can be felt in three ways, as two aspects of light or as voice. As the former, it can appear as a flash of lightning (Leibniz’ “*fulguratio*”) or as the bright, but softer opening in a wood (Heidegger’s *Lichtung*, “glade,” for the experience of the Greek concept of truth “*alētheia*”). Finally, it could take the form of a sudden sound of an external or inner voice, the famous “*heureka*.”

Thus, spirit can come from within, or from without, from events of experience, from other persons or from the text, functioning as occasions or sufficient reasons for its emergence.

Spirit is prepared by values, words, memories, and knowledge, and facilitated by modes of logic, in the capacity of its necessary conditions. However, whatever we may think of the genealogy of a new thought, the process through which it comes

to be is characterized by the capacity of logos to unite internal vision with internal dialogue. This is the mark of thinking as opposed to knowledge as sets of patterns of identification. Thinking is alive, and its principles of life are light and sound.

However, logos, the breath of light, as the life-principle of reason became the victim of history.

## 6 The Conceptual History of Reason

The English concept of “reason,” in use from the early thirteenth century, is extremely complex due to its “translational” travel from Greek culture, via Roman culture, and Christian Scholasticism, into French “*raison*.” It was further shaped by its role in the development of natural law and natural right during the Baroque, and by its homonymic function as the natural light guiding the Enlightenment, not least through its interpretation in the German concept of “*Vernunft*” (the latter forming the Danish concept of “*fornuft*”).

This complexity mirrors the metaphysical, epistemological, and ontological perspectives which reason has to unfold, and also subjects it to interests of knowledge and power. As *The Online Etymology Dictionary* (Douglas Harper 2001–2011) would have it, “reason” dates from c. 1200 and means:

intellectual faculty that adopts actions to ends, “also” statement in an argument, statement of explanation or justification, “from Anglo-French *resoun*, Old French *raison*” course; matter; subject; language, speech; thought, opinion, “from Latin *rationem* (nominative *ratio*)” “reckoning, understanding, motive, cause,” from *ratus*, past participle of *reŕi* “to reckon, think,” from PIE root *\*re(i)-* “to reason, count” (cf. Old English *rædan* “to advise”; ...

In Roman culture, Cicero specifically referred “*ratio*” back to “*lógos*.” Similarly, the broad field of meanings covered by “reason” reflects the meanings of “logos,” and this is further corroborated by the fact that the word to “read” has the same root as “*ratio*,” and the Old English “*rædan*,” and “*redan*” cover the meanings “to advise, counsel, persuade; discuss, deliberate; rule, guide; arrange, equip; forebode; read, explain; learn by reading; put in order.”

The classical passage from Greek “*lógos*” to “*ratio*” in Roman philosophy was not completed until the Middle Ages, when the different vocabulary for the activity of consciousness, for thinking and knowing, found in Greek philosophy: “logos,” “*noûs*,” and “*nóesis*,” were captured by the Latin term “*ratio*,” the root of “reason.” The derivation from “*noûs*,” and “*diánoia*” would form the model for “intellectus,” directly translated into English as “intellect,” but in German and Danish rendered by “*Verstand*” and “forstand.”

The products of using reason and intellect were action and knowledge, the latter word stemming from another root, the Latin “*gnoscere*,” the basis of “cognition,” corresponding to the Greek “*gignóskhein*,” from which “gnosis” stems, the deep spiritual acquaintance with the transcendent.

Thus, “ratio” versus “intellectus” would form the powerful distinction between “*Vernunft*” and “*Verstand*” in German, canonized by Immanuel Kant, and



in some contexts corresponding to the English distinction between “reason” and “intellect”.

A related and important distinction is that between dianoetical or discursive capacities on the one hand (the powers of the analytical intellect), and noetic and intuitive capacities, the powers of the visionary and identifying mind’s eye, on the other. In a modern sense, this might be interpreted as a claim for the existence of a reason of mind and a reason of the body, or, as I have named it, the “body-mind” (Kirkeby 1994).

As just indicated, the root of reason is Latin “*ratio*,” from the PIE base “\**re(i)-*,” “to reason, count.” “*Lógos*” also has this sense, among its rich selection of senses, but it is far more profound, referring to the life-principle of the universe in Greek metaphysics, as well as capturing the creative principle of the Christian God, as we know from the beginning of the gospel of St. John. However, there is a schism here, because during the Renaissance, “*ratio*” acquires both a revolutionary and an instrumental dimension. It becomes the principle of political autonomy, political creation, and scientific and technological skill.

When Thomas Hobbes describes the process of thinking with the word “compute,” he draws on the mental capacity of counting, thus transferring one aspect of ratio. Understood in this way, the analytic capacities of reason imply a performance of power, a will to dissect, to rule through knowledge of the inside of things in the capacity of their ascribed mechanical dimension—at whatever cost. In this context, reason uses the razor of the intellect. Of course, ever since Descartes, this urge to dissect has been accompanied by the focus on another Aristotelian term, the “*súnthesis*.” However, the one who dissects might also be the one who performs the work of recreating the whole. Thus, reason usurps the right to rule by judging, executing, and restoring.

The increasing critical powers of reason originate in this symbolic right to unite the three governing principles of Montesquieu, a right obviously derived from its claim of absolute validity for thinking and acting.

Plato distinguishes between two types of thinking. The “*diánoia*,” on the one side, which corresponds to the mathematical capacity, is an imperfect power of the mind due to its dependence on the senses. For Plato, real thinking would never be captured by the analytical ability of “*ratio*” or “*computare*” but belonged, instead, to “*lógos*” or “*noûs*,” capacities that could transcend the realm of the empirical. Aristotle, for his part, enriched this distinction by talking about an upper part of the soul, the “*noûs*,” which is able to know the essences of things, and a lower part, which just combines elements of thought, the “*dianóeisthai*.” To this, Aristotle adds another distinction, between theoretical reason—pure knowledge of the mind cleansed of bodily prejudices—and practical reason—reason directed towards action, “*diánoia praktikē*” (it also includes technical reason). Practical reason can only succeed when it is allied with “*phrónēsis*,” the normative and experienced-based sensitivity to events and people.

For Aristotle, “*noûs*” is the power of the mind. The mind owes its power to the capacity not to be blocked and blinded by the body, and not to be limited by any cognitive framework or mind-set, nor by any power-based interests. It is a substantial

capacity that can take any shape, it is the “place of forms,” and it is able to think everything which can be thought. In other words, “*noûs*” has the capacity to operate “homonymically,” and so has reason. Aristotle is not definite as to whether reason is formed by norms or is a mere instrument for knowledge. An argument in favor of the first view is the role of reason as the means to obtain the good life, which is definitely a moral-based life—as presented in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. An argument in favor of the latter is the incapacity of the “*nóēsis noēseōs*,” the thinking of thinking, to establish its own foundation (Aristotle 1990, p. 1074, b 34).

It would be quite wrong to see Aristotle as an exponent of instrumental reason. Instead, we might interpret him as a proponent of a reason that is virtual or dynamic in character, a reason of becoming (*gēnesein*), because reason is able to become. However, since Aristotle conceives of mind as superior to the body, his concept of *phronēsis* as both a noetic and an experience-based knowledge, and his use of the concept “*noûs*” for intuition, might legitimize an effort to make him the exponent of the attitude that “*phûsis*,” nature, as the media of perception, not as the fabric of the heavens, incorporates an inferior form of reason. This view is also emphasized by his Platonic use of the key concepts “*aísthēsis*” and “*phantasia*.”

The essential point here is that the Greeks did not exclude a kind of reason that grows out of the reverence to nature, the “*eîdos to enōn*,” “the form coming from within” (Aristotle 1990, p. 1037, a 29).

Still, our own concept of reason is largely shaped by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who saw it as the capacity guiding the intellect, through which human beings create a meaningful world out of the chaos of sense impressions by commanding the use of the intellect. Thus, reason belongs to man, not to nature.

In the wake of this figure of thought, it is still possible to think of alternative types of reason, but they all originate from man’s capacity of making rational projections onto nature. If nature is permitted autonomous reason, it is in the brutal and blind form of what was later to be called evolution. Of course, our belief in the progress of civilizations repeats the forward motion of evolution, but despite market logic, something just as brutal and blind as one might regard evolution, we imagine ourselves as deliberate authors of our own history. Human reason contains a form of rationality that is different in kind, and presumably superior, to the one in nature. After all, ever since Aristotle, the human being has been defined as the animal who can speak, and since Romantic philosophers such as Schelling and later Schopenhauer took the opposite position, reason was seen as the prerogative of man. The coalescence of thought and language, as well as the powers of science and technology, became the quintessence of reason.

However, twentieth-century philosophers, such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, cast doubt on this picture, by conceiving reason as a transcendent quality of the world. We are not the sole proprietors of reason, and our mind is not the only and proper place to reveal its secret. Reason is hidden in the world. Other philosophers, such as Martin Heidegger, imagined a new way of thinking that returned to a pre-Socratic mode of thought, where reason does not present the world in an image, and does not transform being into an object. Instead, thinking receives the world by identifying with it, because the world is an active part in the process of experience and

cognition. However, this might presuppose a universal suprahuman concept of reason, where being and thinking unite into one.

The French philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas also conceives of a dialogical experience, in which Otherness keeps its autonomy, and reason does not usurp through projection and violent identification. Lévinas bases this view on the idea that reason develops during conversation, especially teaching, and that dialogue thus produces reason without presupposing it.

Finally, we must mention Hans Jonas, who he phrased a moral imperative that placed nature as also being a moral subject, hence widening the scope of reason: “Act so that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life” (Jonas 1979). Jonas is often seen as the founder of bioethics.

These are all models for a receptive and sensitive reason, a reason sensitive towards man and nature, and a reason that does not exclude, and is neither logocentric (in the autocratic, and instrumental sense of *logos*) nor ethnocentric. This also means that reason might be a manifold phenomenon, irreducible to a single, superior, hegemonic power.

When reason triumphs over the intellect, Greek tradition asks us to use words for wisdom “*sophía*” and “*gnósis*,” in Latin translated into “*sapientia*”; and also “*phrónēsis*,” rendered as “*prudentia*,” practical wisdom. However, the Greek philosophers were very careful to avoid defining wisdom. Socrates is famous for saying that he knew nothing, or that the decision as to whether he was wise belonged to somebody who could claim to be so. This person could, of course, not be found. A younger contemporary philosopher, Antisthenes, would connect wisdom to the knowledge of how to dispose of anything to be unlearned.

This minimalist view of wisdom places thinking and knowledge in strict opposition. Thinking is the capacity to judge between what is necessary to know and what is not in relation to living the good life.

## 7 The Aggressive Strategies of Creating Homonyms

The creation of homonyms is by no means epistemologically restricted to the normative perspective. The concepts “carpet bombing” and “brainwashing” are not benevolent metaphors. However, there is a fundamental principle in making homonyms which in and of itself generates a basic attitude that develops an alternative dimension of reason.

It is not difficult to see that what phenomenology and constructionism often critically label “the paradigm of representation” has its roots here. This means that knowledge, and hence science, adhere to a model in which an objective and factual world is represented, referred to, or denoted, by a conceptual medium, i.e., language, that expresses the desired malleability—however, one must remark that quantum physics challenges this conception of the real.

The point here is that the power over Otherness, i.e., Nature, arises with the development of power over people, since realizing this power need, the cooperation

and hence coordination, and management of many people. In Western culture, such power is legitimized through the claim that private property is the basis of freedom.

In his *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Hegel legitimates private property by placing it as the instrument of freedom.

The person has the right to posit his will in every object, which through this act becomes my own, ...man's absolute right of appropriation in relation to every object. *PDR* § 44

These lines are important. Freedom is a product of private property, because it is the possibility to objectify myself in external objects; as the last line states: "man's absolute right of appropriation in relation to every object."

That which is put before one's eyes is a possible object of ownership. Sight conquers the world through kinetic and tactile potency. In science, this happens through instruments of seeing (magnifying and measuring) and through conceptualization, hypothesis, and theory. Hence, reality as an objectified domain is conditioned by the ownership of one's individual experience and reflection. The word "private" comes to mind with its basis in Latin: "privation," as noted earlier, is a translation from the Greek concept "*stérēsis*," a category in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, to exclude or to be excluded from.

Now, let us further investigate the core and origin of this mind-set of—what has rightly been called—"objectivism" in order to see how we are able to properly honor transcendence and a reason of "generous becoming".

The described strategy or tactic of generating homonymity by transforming the verb into a substantive creates the basis of instrumental reason. A substantive is able to function as a predicate with qualities of different kinds, and thus a realm of reality is produced which is liable to a proper strangeness or alienation, making it possible to disclaim responsibility.

The Roman philosopher Cicero can enlighten us here in his use of the word "equity," which means civil rights, but also private property, since he named it "*aequitas*," a concept from Roman law referring to the principle that a judge shall consider the circumstances of the defendant when committing a crime, and hence show leniency. "*Aequitas*" was translated from the Greek philosophical term "*epieikeia*," so important in the ethics of Aristotle and meaning that the powerful shall hold back his power towards the weak. Then, in this conception of the relation between rights and duties, the "*obiectus*" is transformed into a subject, which must be taken care of on its own conditions. This is the first example of the rejection of the entire representation figure, with its creation of cool distance guaranteed by power.

The concept of sense that marks the oppositional attitude to representation is *significance*. As a state of mind, it corresponds to the principle of producing meaning called auto-onomatopoesis. It is the concept of sensitivity to the existential range and import of one's own action as the basis of meaning in the capacity of empathic interpreting. It is the trans-conceptual core of "doing meaning" by receiving meaning from what is done, a sort of meta-consciousness in the form of a rich and precise sensitivity constituted in the heart of acting—but it is not genuine "enacting," since what is acted out comes into palpable being during the very act, and thus encompasses Otherness.

Signification is in the sounds and gestures one produces as the expression of the responses of our body and mind to what is happening. One could speak about a self-referential choreography. All the senses cooperate in this “syn-kin-aesthetic” activity. Thus, it is never just about expression as exclamation, as ventilation and pure signal, but rather about a co-expression in which event and body-mind join in a chiasmic dynamics to give room for “reality.” No doubt, as it is mimed by inner speech, significance has more than a touch of an iconology of sound (the German and Danish words “*Stimmung*” and “*stemning*” both mean an activity of voice, tuning an instrument, and a mental mood), but significance is always first and foremost a meta-iconology, pointing beyond formalized recognition through words, working through sensed patterns of recognition. Significance could be called “an anti-sign level” of experience, because it has no reference beyond itself, it is an allegory of silence and the work within the distinct shapes and pure colors of the mental land of shadows.

As an ideal setting for the phenomenon of interrelation, significance, in its capacity as the genuine mode of mental manifestation of auto-onomatopoesis, shapes the encounter between people without reification. What is known as dialogical philosophy emphasizes this, as we know from the work of Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, Emmanuel Lévinas, and Carl Rogers.

Here the “*dialégesthai*,” the dialogue, from “*dia*,” “through,” plus “*légein*,” “to speak” (the word *lógos* can easily be heard in these words), announces an alternative to reductive analysis and cynical deconstruction of the other person, namely the generous reconstruction of the other person and hence, of all the dimensions of Otherness, by means of ethical fantasy.

## 8 Thinking as General Form of Creating Homonyms

Thinking, then, is the power to make all knowledge relative to a wording, internal or external, which mimics, replicates, or redoubles the synkinesthetic impression, and displaces it ideationally or idiomatically. Through this process of symbolic sound, internal images and blotches of sense are stirred and structured by answering the discursive movements and directing and driving these movements as well. Thinking changes perspective through a corporeal knowledge of its subject, the intimacy of which makes it possible to isolate or connect fields through homonymic comparison and creation. The Dutch astronomer, mathematician, and physicist of the late Baroque, Christian Huygens, coined the term “cosmotheoros,” when discussing life on other planets. It means “the one who looks at worlds.” Nowadays, we speak about a helicopter perspective. Thinking incorporates such a perspective, which we must bind to a particular capacity, shaping the ways that we see and listen. This capacity is called “reason,” the power to unite internal and external experience through homonymity. Through the chiasmic labor of the verb, the corporeal and the incorporeal dimensions of being are able to exemplify and instantiate each other.

Reason could be defined as the meta-function of this activity.

In a normative context, we can follow Kant in his definition of reason as a capacity which manifests itself through three qualities: to criticize, to identify empathically with, and to be in harmony with oneself. This is meant to emphasize the liberating, common-wealth-creating, and authenticity-producing capacities of thinking, but there is another important quality in reflection, to heal. Calvert Watkins writes about the PIE language:

A number of verbs denoting mental activity are found. The most widespread is “men-”, preserved in English MIND. Other derivatives refer to remembering, warning (putting in mind), and thinking in general. A root notable for the diversity of its derivatives is “med-”, which may be defined as “to take the appropriate measures.” Reflexes of this verb range in meaning from “rule,” through “measure” (MODICUM, from Latin), to “physician” (Latin medicus).<sup>9</sup>

Plato brought philosophy and madness together in the *Phaedrus*, and “mania” is also derived from the root \*men-, similar to the Greek words “mántis,” “seer,” and “ménos,” “passion, spirit,” and the Homeric “mémona,” “I yearn.” One must not forget that reason has its way of longing too.

One could add that the root \*man-, which forms the Latin word “manus” and the English word “manual,” means “hand,” but also to “protect.” It is found in Old English “mund,” which besides “hand,” also means “protection, guardian,” in Danish “formynder.” This root comes close to the root of mind, “\*men-.” Immanuel Kant remarked that the hand is our external brain. Most words for conceiving and understanding contain the metaphor of grasping, placing ideas before one, being strong enough to keep a position, etc. “Conceive” stems from Latin “concipere,” “become pregnant,” as a metaphorical expression of “to take in and hold, keep.” It unites “com”+“capere,” “to take,” from PIE “\*kap-,” “to grasp.”

Also “understand” from PIE root “\*sta-,” emphasizes the capacity to hold on to something. To “comprehend,” from “com”+“prehendere,” “to catch hold of, seize,” confirms this haptic foundation, as does to “get” (an idea) from Old Norse “geta,” “to obtain, reach,” from PIE root “\*ghend-,” “seize, take.” This confirms how important the body is to thinking.

The power to create homonyms is based on the capacity to sense the relatedness or familiarity of different domains of perception. To “approach” and to “touch” an idea, or to “fulfill” a plan, are examples of homonyms that augment the exploration of new fields of ideas and plans. The metaphor opens up the capacities of knowing about the target of the comparison. Since an idea might be seen as a phenomenon that can be touched, it must have properties, and the same is true for plans. We can begin to analyze their qualities and, hence, their essence.

When we “build” a theory and “go down beneath the surface” of a conception, we are symbolically mobilizing techniques known from material practice. Hence, we are also able to connect fields, for example, how we treat nature and how we treat people, because we develop the practice of forming homonyms into more refined analogical procedures.

<sup>9</sup> Watkins, op. cit., p. 14.

Reason also manifests itself through the possibility of a critical search for roots inside the parts of the analogy, constituting the basis for an investigation of the degree to which its metaphorical content can sustain the creation of meaning. Thus, it becomes possible to undertake an evaluation of the resilience of the sensual basis of experience to be generalized.

This cosmotheoretical behavior is the product of reason. Homonymity provides the possibility of relating the corporeal with the incorporeal, which is the mark of reason. The incorporeal is effectuated as an experience when the concrete means of making homonyms takes on a symbolic form.

Maimonides remarks that the Hebraic word “*ahar*,” “back,” produces the sense of following a leader—since one accepts that he goes in front (Maimonides, pp. 53–54). This implies that there must have been more experiences with other leaders than just one, since leaders die and loyalty must be transferred to others, if society is to survive. In addition, situations other than war, such as hunting and changing habitat, must be the basis of the analogy. All in all, the authority invested in this relation needs further institutional foundation, like punishment, rituals, inheritance, prototypically caught in the core sense of the Latin “*auctor*,” namely “father,” but also “founder,” “the one causing things to grow.” Hence, “*auctoritas*” came to mean “invention, advice, influence, and order.”

Reason manifests itself in the capacity to perform an overview of these different contextual markers and to abstract from them, creating an “ideal type” of the word, a process that also implies a critical position, since it throws perceptions back on themselves using the mirror of “*dúnamis*,” of possibility and power.

## 9 Summary

This chapter explores the character, conditions, conflict structure, and genealogy of reason (“*lógos*,” “*ratio*”). The hypothesis is that only reason can create homonymity, covering almost every possible relation between mind and matter. Hence, through its unrestricted capacity to adapt, reason can function as the general means of exchange between experiences belonging to different practices, with the ability to generalize through fertile abstraction to form the act of reflection. The point is that reason does not need to be an inborn faculty, since this would presuppose, perhaps paradoxically, that our mental apparatus shared the content of forms and the functioning with the material world. Instead, reason could be understood as a capacity to create through our perception-based, bodily, or “synkinesthetic” interaction with the world. However, this demands a general theory of the co-emergence of language and thought, since reason forms the quintessence of semantics (“*lógos*” also means speech). Reason must be a function of the way language becomes. I call this process “auto-onomatopoesis,” or “self-mimesis.” Since it is the verb and not the substantive that is the historical pivot in linguistic development, we can understand why reason relates to sensing per se, because this bases the criterion of certainty on

the activity of seeing, hearing, doing, on proprioception, or “koenesthesia,” and not on the object form of that which is seen, heard, and done. The verb in the capacity of pure activity will also explain the phenomenon of homonymy.

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**Part IV**  
**The Pragmatics of Utterance**

# Joint Utterances and the (Split-) Turn Taking Puzzle

Eleni Gregoromichelaki and Ruth Kempson

**Abstract** This chapter argues that the occurrence of jointly constructed utterances (*split utterances*) in conversation has wide implications for current linguistic theories. Firstly, we show that standard formal syntactic and semantic/pragmatic theories are unable to cope with such conversational data due to the widely assumed competence/performance distinction. We then present some recent developments in the domain of formal models of dialogue, in order to assess whether they meet the design features that a general analysis of dialogue, and of the split-utterance phenomenon in particular, demand. We argue that what is crucial for such an account is incorporating both the physical and social situatedness of language use, combined with modelling the incrementality of linguistic processing, within the grammar formalism employed. In previous work, we have argued that the grammatical framework of Dynamic Syntax (DS) augmented with the flexible semantic representations made available by Type Theory with Records (TTR) meets these requirements. Accordingly, through the phenomenon of split utterances, we illustrate how the grammar itself needs to be seen as a holistic, action-based model of language use incorporating incremental interaction with context and flexible mechanisms of processing. These requirements are needed in order to deal, not only with what have been traditionally thought of as indexicals, but also with the representation of fine-grained sub-sentential utterance events, speech-act information, roles assigned to participants, etc. This stepwise interaction is necessary for a general account of how a speaker-change in mid-utterance affects the form and interpretation of linguistic elements. As a result, the incremental stance allows a natural characterisation of *split utterances* as continuations/interruptions, whereas, without it, the only recourse is the assumption of widespread ellipsis, mind-reading and multiple ambiguity of sub-sentential fragments. We then take a wider view of the data characterised as the Turn Taking Puzzle (Ginzburg 2012) by combining the phenomenon of split utterances with an account of the function of *why?* fragments ((Split-) Turn Taking Puzzle, STTP). On the basis of the STTP data, we argue that it is crucial for syntactic specifications and interpretation to interact with the modelling of the sub-sentential dynamics of the discourse-situation updates. From these interactions,

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we draw conclusions as to the significance of the STTP data for the design of grammar formalisms and dialogue models, as well as for the general conception of linguistic knowledge.

**Keywords** Dialogue · Speech acts · Discourse · Sub-sentential fragments

## 1 Introduction: Language Use in Interaction and the Shape of the Grammar

### 1.1 *Standard Methodological Assumptions in Natural Language Modelling*

A common position in the philosophy of language, largely adopted in the domain of formal semantics, has been the separation of the ‘intentionality’ of natural language (NL) and thought from:

- a. the exercise of the capacities and epistemic resources that underpin perception and action
- b. the environmental and sociocultural factors influencing and shaping these capacities.

On the basis of this separation, it has been assumed that an adequate theory of meaning will be given through a formal theory of ‘truth’ for NL sentences (see e.g. Davidson 1967; Larson and Segal 1995; Montague 1970). Such a theory for NL provides a system of finite resources that, internalised by an individual in a form of ‘knowledge-that’, enables the user of the theory to understand and produce every well-formed sentence of the language (*compositionality*). It is then claimed that, beyond these assumptions, if we turn to examine the employment of this abstract knowledge in realistic settings, i.e. in communication, we would inevitably be led to the conclusion that we

have abandoned not only the ordinary notion of a language, but we have erased the boundary between *knowing a language* and *knowing our way around in the world* generally. (Davidson 1986, pp. 445–446, italics ours)

As a response to a similar worry in the domain of NL form (*syntax*), until recently, a common methodology in theoretical linguistics has been

to try to isolate *coherent systems* that are amenable to naturalistic inquiry and that interact to yield some aspects of the full complexity. If we follow this course, we are led to the conjecture that there is a *generative procedure* that “grinds out” linguistic expressions with their interface properties, and *performance systems* that access these instructions and are used for interpreting and expressing one’s thoughts. (Chomsky 2000, p. 29, italics ours)

This claim is underpinned by philosophical/psycholinguistic views according to which the study of NL use does not provide for the isolation of a ‘coherent system’ of inquiry. Consequently, in formal and theoretical studies, various forms of abstraction are introduced to deliver a cleaned-up, idealised domain of data and theoretical tools for NL analysis. Modelling recursion in syntax and compositional-

ity in semantics, totally divorced from issues of processing and situated use, have become the sole criteria of adequacy for such theories and have motivated in turn a strictly individualistic/internalist methodology in the investigation of the nature of NL justified by a strict separation between the (modelling of) linguistic knowledge (*competence*) and the application of this knowledge in actual situations of language use (*performance*).

## 1.2 *Challenges to Standard Methodologies*

### 1.2.1 *Situated Use and Semantics/Pragmatics*

These methodological hypotheses have been called into question by several researchers interested in modelling the capacities underpinning NL use. In the domain of formal semantics, this has led to border disputes with pragmatics, in that it is no longer clear whether the separation between ‘linguistically encoded’ meanings and online, dynamically derived ones, in interaction with contextual factors, can be enforced. In this respect, there has long been work emphasising the role of linguistic underspecification in the process of deriving meaning in context (see, e.g. Sperber and Wilson 1995; Levinson 2000; Capone, this volume) and formulating notions of ‘procedural meaning’ that cannot be accommodated under truth-theoretic conceptions of semantics (e.g. Blakemore 1987). Further inadequacies of traditional truth-based theories have been highlighted by the ‘dynamic turn’ in semantics (Discourse Representation Theory (DRT, Kamp & Reyle 1993), Dynamic Predicate Logic (DPL, Groenendijk and Stokhof 1991) and related frameworks, see also Jaszczolt et al., this volume) that have drawn attention to the importance of conceiving meaning as updates to ‘information states’ rather than, statically, as sets of truth conditions (propositions) assigned to sentences. Nevertheless, all these approaches still concentrate on individual mental states modelled as autonomous representations that abstract away from the social and material circumstances of NL processing.

In contrast, recent efforts in formal semantics, inspired by work in Situation Semantics and DRT, have shifted attention away from a strict formulation of a truth theory as a theory of semantic competence to developing theories of semantic interpretation in context. For this purpose, a common representational system allowing the specification and seamless integration of multiple types of information has been sought. One recent articulation of this effort has been via the development of Type Theory with Records (TTR, see, e.g. Cooper 2005, 2012). TTR provides a transparent semantic representation format that can integrate both the low-level (sub-symbolic) perceptual information and underspecified, flexible meanings of NL expressions (see e.g. Larsson 2011). Such integration allows the modelling of how NL forms and meanings adapt to the discourse situation via the formalisation of an evolving, structured notion of the (multi-modal) context. Consequently, instead of adopting the assumption that the role of semantic theories is to assign truth conditions to decontextualised SENTENCES, in these approaches, attention has shifted to the modelling of situated UTTERANCES and speech acts. This has led to a significant expansion of the data deemed appropriate for inclusion in a formal theo-

ry of interpretation, namely the modelling of the use of language in interaction and the demands that this places on appropriate semantic models (see e.g. Ginzburg and Cooper 2004; Ginzburg 2012). Another strand of this development, based on recent advances in developing compositional forms of DRT, is the PTT model (Poesio and Traum 1997, 1998; Poesio and Rieser 2010), which similarly expands the dynamic view of semantics to take into account underspecification of meaning resolved in context and language use in interaction. Similar developments have been taking place in the domain of syntax, to which we now turn.

### 1.2.2 Incrementality and Interaction in Syntax

Contrary to the standard ‘autonomy-of-syntax’ hypothesis, grammatical models have recently begun to appear that reflect aspects of performance to varying degrees (Hawkins 2004; Phillips 2003; Lombardo and Sturt 2002; Sturt and Lombardo 2005; Ginzburg and Cooper 2004; Kempson et al. 2001; Cann et al. 2005; Ginzburg 2012). In some of these models, instead of concentrating on the derivation of whole sentences as input to semantics, syntactic modelling involves the psycholinguistics-inspired commitment to reflect the incremental, situated and opportunistic nature of NL processing. This is because psycholinguistic experimental data, data obtained from natural conversations, as well as phenomenological intuitions, suggest that processing begins efficiently before the end of a sentence. For this reason, the effect of such incremental processing can be seen in real conversations where sentence-sized units are uncommon. However, under standard competence-performance assumptions, such speech data represent defective, degenerate NL uses which appear at best as either incredibly complex from a performance point of view or completely irrelevant from the standpoint of a competence theory. Indeed, conversational data do not display the idealised sentence-to-proposition format required by a competence grammar. Instead, they consist of ‘fragments’ (see e.g. turn 8 in (1) below) that are incrementally constructed and comprehended, and either then abandoned (turn 6, 7) or elaborated by the interlocutor (*split utterances*, see turns 3, 4, 5, 12, 14, 21):<sup>1</sup>

#### Example (1)

1. A: Instead of having <name hidden> <unclear> they had to come through the Dock Commission all of the men, they wanted so and so men for that boat, they used to come through to me.
2. B: Before that though, <name hidden> and <name hidden> [<unclear> had their own men]
3. A: [Had their own men]
4. B: unload the boats?
5. A: unload the boats, yes. They <unclear>
6. B: They were employed directly by

<sup>1</sup> The data that constitute the main focus of this chapter, here, split utterances, appear shaded in the examples.

7. A: That's right but they all came
8. B: <name hidden>?
9. A: They used to work say one week and have about a month off or go on the dole for a month.
10. B: So then what happened was, did the Dock Commission say you can't have your own men anymore?
11. A: That's right they had to go on a rota.
12. B: Run by the Dock Commission?
13. A: Run by the Dock Commission. See the dockers then all got together and they said right so many men for that job, so many for that job and that didn't matter who they were, they had to <unclear> their job, all the way round the dock.
14. B: Whether they wanted to go on that job or not?
15. A: Whether they want to go or not, they take their turn and the employer had to pay a percentage into the pool what those men earned, so when those men hadn't work at all they drew their money from the National Dock Labour Board.
16. B: Is this where the National Dock Labour Board came into existence?
17. A: That's how how they come into existence, yes <name hidden> he was a man what introduced that.
18. B: When was this?
19. A: Oh that's er, I would say about nineteen forty roughly <clears throat> I'd say about nineteen forty that came in, might have been before that.
20. B: Before that then if they were ill
21. A: They get nothing.
22. B: Could they not get any welfare benefit?
23. A: No

[BNC, H5H: 89–113]

In our view, split-utterance data demonstrate the radical context dependence of NL in conversation both on the syntactic and the interpretation side. Given orthodox assumptions, it is far from obvious how to address this context- and interlocutor-dependence. Standardly, the output of the grammar<sup>2</sup> is a set of structures defining well-formed complete sentences and propositional interpretations, which psycholinguistic and pragmatic models then take as input to some performance theory for further enrichment. Upon such a view, none of the fragments above will be included in the set of well-formed expressions, so a syntactic explanation for their successful processing has no obvious starting point. They are problematic for semantic accounts also, since interruptions are possible at any point, and in some cases so early that no intended propositional content is as yet determinable. On the other hand, any account that overrides the grammar has to contend with the fact that such sub-sentential switches involve speaker/hearer exchange of roles across all

<sup>2</sup> We use here the notion of *grammar* common in formal semantics, where it consists of a syntactic component and a semantic component. We seek to redefine this notion of “grammar” to a more holistic model that includes pragmatics, and any relevant processing issues.

syntactic dependencies (Purver et al. 2009; Gregoromichelaki et al. 2011), which indicates that licensing has to occur via the same mechanisms that enable canonical intra-sentential licensing:

- Example (2)** Joe: We were having an automobile discussion....  
 Henry: discussing the psychological motives for  
 Mel: drag racing in the streets. [Sacks 1992, pp. 144–145]
- Example (3)** Helen: When I left you at the tube earlier, I went home and found  
 my boyfriend...  
 James: In bed with another woman. Shit! [Sliding Doors]
- Example (4)** Louise: No a Soshe is someone who [is a carbon copy of their friend.  
 Roger: [drinks Pepsi.]
- Example (5)** Ken: Instead my grandmother offering him a drink, of beer, she'll  
 say ["Wouldju-"  
 Louise: ["Wanna glassa milk?"]

In terms of pragmatic accounts, in traditional individualistic theories of speech acts (e.g. Searle 1969), speakers fulfil their communicative intentions by performing illocutionary acts embedding complete propositional contents. In this fulfilment, the interlocutor is modelled as a component of the speaker's knowledge, a factor shaping the content and form of the utterance only through the speaker's representation of what the SPEAKER perceives as being their mutual knowledge (*common ground*). However, as the data in (1)–(5) indicates and research in interactional linguistics (see e.g. Arundale 2008) and psycholinguistics has demonstrated, NL utterances and contents in real interactions involve incremental sub-sentential processing, situatedness (Mey, this volume) and feedback (Goodwin 1979) and, thus, in various senses co-construction by several interlocutors. Contra the single sentence/proposition methodology, utterances, like various other events in conversation (e.g. even silences), are always interpretable in the local sequential conversational environment which not only provides for their coherence in that particular sequence but also affects how the meaning of terms in the currently processed utterance is derived (see e.g. Schegloff 2007).

From these points of view, meaning is not inherent in individual-internal complete propositional thoughts delivered via speech acts performed turn-by-turn by interlocutors. As psycholinguistic studies have shown, the mechanisms that sustain interaction between individuals contribute in a crucial way to the development of meaningful exchanges. For example, Schober and Clark (1989) found that conversational partners who were given the means of interacting with a speaker had a different quality of understanding than overhearers who lacked this possibility, even though, from an external point of view, the information conveyed through linguistic means was exactly the same. In addition, language use in conversation is highly dependent, moment-to-moment during the interaction, on integrating and combining inputs from several senses comprising non-verbal behaviours and features of the physical environment (multi-modality). For example, in face-to-face communication, there is a tight linguistic and embodied synchronization between speakers and listeners (Pickering and Garrod 2004, 2012), with constant feedback

loops jointly determining the course of the utterance as it unfolds via verbal and non-verbal signals (Goodwin 1979, 1981, 1995). Conversational participants follow each other's utterances and behaviours incrementally, perceiving and acting in the discourse situation where elements acquire variable meanings according to their temporal appearance in the string of words (and not just under some overarching action to be completed at transition-relevant places, as claimed by Conversation Analysis accounts).

## 2 Language as Action, Plan-based Approaches

In order to cope with such data, a number of researchers have recently developed a wider conception of grammar as a component of a more holistic model of utterance interpretation and production. Embracing Austin's observation (1962) that NL use is a form of action, and, more specifically, joint action, as illustrated by the highlighted data in (1)–(5), NL understanding is subsumed under general models of action interpretation (e.g. Bratman 1990, 1992, 1993). The defining characteristic in such analyses of the significance of action is treating speaker intentions as *plans* and demonstrating how a speaker's utterances can be assigned structure and meaning in terms of the plans those utterances serve (see e.g. Grosz and Sidner 1986). Plans also link speech acts with non-linguistic behaviour and the environmental contextual constraints. Within such a research context, the challenge of modelling the full word-by-word incrementality required in dialogue has recently been taken up by Poesio and Rieser (2010).

Poesio and Rieser seek to explain the phenomenon of (a subcategory of) split utterances through adopting the assumptions of the planning model, namely, reasoning involving intention-recognition. They set out a dialogue model for German, defining a thorough, fine-grained account of dialogue interactivity. Their primary aim is to model *collaborative completions*, as in (2)–(5). Crucially, their data come from co-operative task-oriented dialogues (e.g. video-recorded experiments where the participants are required to build something together).<sup>3</sup> In these cases, takeover by the hearer relies on the remainder of the utterance taken to be understood or inferable from a store of mutual knowledge (*common ground*). The Poesio and Rieser account aims at modelling the generation and realization of 'joint intentions', sharing of which is what, in their view, underlies the production and comprehension of collaborative completions.

Unlike standard formal semantic models which focus on a truth-based semantics for sentences and a view of common ground as a repository of mutually believed propositions to support inference (as in e.g. Stalnaker 1979), the first distinctive feature of Poesio and Rieser (2010) is the assumption—derived from ideas developed in Situation Semantics (Barwise and Perry 1983) and Clark (1996)—that the

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<sup>3</sup> The significance of intention recognition even in task-oriented dialogue experiments has been disputed (see Mills and Gregoromichelaki 2010).



common ground representation also includes the *discourse situation*, i.e. the context of the conversation itself. Along with the mutually accepted truth-evaluable content of utterances, information about the discourse situation is recorded in a unified representation, a discourse representation structure (DRS), modelling each participant's 'information state' at each point in the dialogue. The occurrence of utterances of sub-sentential constituents is recorded in this representation as the occurrence of events in a certain temporal order (*micro-conversational events*) which thus become part of the common ground. The occurrence of these micro-conversational events leads to immediate updates of the participants' information states with the initiation of semantic and pragmatic interpretation processes (Larsson and Traum 2000; Stone 2004) following the specifications of the grammar. As regards pragmatic integration, in this model, speech acts are conceptualised as events too, termed *conversational events*, since just like any other events, they can serve as the antecedents of anaphoric expressions:

- Example (6)** A: You're an idiot.  
 B: *That* was uncalled for. [that: A insulting B]

More innovatively, speech acts are also viewed as components in a *joint plan* (Bratman 1992; Clark 1996) whose establishment and recognition drive the actions of speaker and hearer. Consequently, the Poesio and Rieser (2010) modelling of collaborative completions hinges on two main points: the assumption of the necessary recognition and adoption of the interlocutor's intentions according to the shared joint plan, and the use of incremental grammatical processing based on Lexicalized Tree Adjoining Grammar (LTAG). According to them, data like (2)–(5) require that the hearer, who knows the intention of the speaker and shares their utterance plan, produces a continuation that the speaker themselves would have provided otherwise.

Poesio and Rieser's thorough and detailed account of completions marks a significant advance in the analysis of such phenomena in many respects and, significantly, in that an incremental model of LTAG is adopted. As Gregoromichelaki et al. (2012), Eshghi et al. (2010, 2012) argue, this is a welcome approach since, in contrast to claims in Conversational Analysis research (e.g. Lerner 1991), the data show that takeover can occur anywhere in an emerging utterance, even across strict syntactic dependencies, e.g. earlier in (2) a preposition and its object, in (4) a relative pronoun and the rest of the relative clause, in (5) the verb and its propositional object, and below in (7) an antecedent-anaphor relation, and in (8) between a Negative Polarity Item and its triggering environment, the interrogative indicator:

- Example (7)** A: I heard a shout. Did you  
 B: Burn myself? No, luckily.  
**Example (8)** A: Have you mended  
 B: any of your chairs? Not yet.

Given that such dependencies have to be defined grammar-internally, the grammar is unquestionably needed to license such shared constructions. Nevertheless, the Poesio and Rieser account cannot deal exactly with those crucial data. This is

because it still relies on the assumption of a string-based level of analysis, in that the grammar includes a distinct level of syntactic representation that provides a tree structure whose nodes are inhabited by words of the language. Sharing of utterance plans will generate identical string-syntactic representations for each interlocutor, and this allows the incremental generation and integration of other-initiated continuations. However, exactly this assumption threatens the generality of the analysis, since there are cases where split utterances cannot be seen as an extension by the second contributor of the proffered *string of words/sentence*:

**Example (9)** Eleni: Is this yours or...  
 Yo: Yours. [natural data]

In (9), as well as in (7)–(8), the string of words (*sentence*) that the completion yields is not at all what either participant takes themselves to have constructed, collaboratively or otherwise. In (7), even though the grammar is responsible for the dependency that licenses the reflexive anaphor *myself*, the explanation for A’s continuation cannot be string-based as then *myself* would not be locally bound (its antecedent is *you*). Moreover, in LTAG (Poesio and Rieser’s syntactic framework), parsing relies on the presence of a *head* that provides the skeleton of the predicate-argument structure. Yet, as (1).3, (1).4, (1).12, (1).21 and (4), (7) indicate, utterance takeover can take place before the appearance of the head that determines argument dependencies (see also Purver et al. 2009; Howes et al. 2009, 2011). So, string-based grammars cannot account straightforwardly for many types of split utterances except by treating each part as an elliptical sentence requiring reconstruction of the missing elements with case-specific adjustments to guarantee grammaticality/interpretability (as is needed in (8)–(9)). Given that such splits can occur at any point, as we have shown, an ellipsis account would either necessitate processes of deletion and reconstruction of such power as to threaten theoretical viability (see, e.g., Morgan 1973), or the multiplication of types of syntactic analyses, hence indefinite structural homonymy (Stainton 2006), or both. Moreover, the rhetorical significance of one participant’s taking over the structure initiated by the other (co-construction), instead of starting a new utterance, gets lost in such accounts (Gregoromichelaki et al. 2013b).

Besides the problems engendered due to the assumption of an independent string-based syntactic structure, further considerations threaten the explanatory generality of Poesio and Rieser-style, plan-based accounts. Their account relies on the generation and recognition of the speaker’s propositional intentions as the basis for the explanation. Yet, in free conversation, such fragments can occur before the informative intention—which is standardly defined as requiring a propositional object—has been made manifest. Unlike what happens in Poesio and Rieser’s task-oriented dialogues, many fragments do not involve straightforward participant cooperation or inference as to the speaker’s intended utterance. For example, in the following, there is no reason to suppose that the continuation necessarily ensues only after the hearer has considered some propositional whole derived from the speaker’s intended utterance (termed as *hostile completions* (13) or *devious suggestions* (14) in Gregoromichelaki et al. 2011):

**Example (10)** Helen: I, I'm sure you're not a nutcase or a psycho or anything, it's just that, um I'm not, I'm not that good at, um you know, um...

James: Constructing sentences? [Sliding Doors]

**Example (11)** Helen: I love this bridge. My great grandfather helped to build it. I often come and... stand on it when I want to, um...

James: Build a bridge? I'm sorry [Sliding Doors]

**Example (12)** Connie: Clarence, I am looking for you! Where are you? I want to talk to you! Clarence?

<Connie bangs hard on cupboard's door where Clarence is hiding>

Clarence: Ah, Connie, splendid! Erm... Heard you calling. Wasn't able to find you, so I thought, what a capital idea to...

Connie: Fling the servants' shoes around? [Blandings:  
Pig-hoo-o-o-o-ey! BBC2  
14/1/13]

**Example (13)** (A and B arguing:)

A: In fact what this shows is

B: that you are an idiot

**Example (14)** (A mother, B son)

A: This afternoon first you'll do your homework, then wash the dishes and then

B: you'll give me \$20?

**Example (15)** Daughter: Oh here dad, a good way to get those corners out

Dad: is to stick yer finger inside.

Daughter: well, that's one way. [Lerner 1991]

As Gregoromichelaki et al. (2011, 2012) argue, the hearer, who is in the process of parsing the speaker's syntactic construction, just takes it over and appends material serving their own purposes. The significance of these data is that such exchanges show overtly the active involvement of the hearer in shaping the content of the utterance, thus providing evidence that the primacy of speaker's intention for the recovery of the significance of the speech act is not a warranted theoretical assumption. However, some such pre-specified 'joint' intention/plan is what drives the Poesio and Rieser account of completions and many more accounts of coordination in dialogue (see, e.g., Grosz and Sidner 1986), despite the fact that such fixed joint intentionality is decidedly non-normal in free conversation (see, e.g., Mills and Gregoromichelaki 2010).

Further evidence against such plan/intention-based explanations comes from elliptical clarification questions which can query covert goals of an utterance. Such evidence is provided by Ginzburg (2012) to which we now turn.

### 3 The Interactive Stance on Grammar and *Why* Questions

Like Poesio and Rieser (2010), Ginzburg (2012) provides a holistic model that, while maintaining formal semantics' standard concerns, e.g. a notion of compositionality, seeks to integrate previously neglected aspects of utterance interpretation and production in a dialogue competence model. However, an important aspect of Ginzburg's model is that it takes the demands of language use in interaction as being built directly into the grammar to a much larger extent than does the Poesio and Rieser account. For example, in various analyses, he shows that, often, the conventional meaning of a word or syntactic construction involves reference to notions such as 'current issue under discussion', 'conversation initiation', 'acknowledgement of understanding' or 'ask intended reference of the interlocutor's utterance'. In order to provide analyses for such elements, like Poesio and Rieser, Ginzburg offers a model of context that assumes that the common ground in conversation not only includes a store of the interlocutors' common knowledge/beliefs but also all the facts related to the *discourse situation*, including facts about the form of utterances that have occurred, their grammatical types, phonology, syntax as well as semantics. As in Poesio and Rieser, illocutionary acts and utterance (*locutionary*) acts are treated in a uniform manner, i.e., as events whose occurrence is recorded in the common ground. However, unlike the reliance of Poesio and Rieser on shared plans, Ginzburg, instead, takes seriously the potential for misunderstanding, rejection and correction, which leads to detailed modelling of the divergences of each interlocutor's information state at various points in the dialogue. This divergence is directly built into the model of the context and has direct interaction with the grammatical specifications. In order to implement this, each interlocutor's information state is partitioned into a 'public' and a 'private' part. Each interlocutor's (version of) the public part, termed the *Dialogue Gameboard*, can be distinct at various points in the conversation according to whether the interlocutor assumes the role of either 'speaker' or 'hearer'. The private part includes beliefs not considered mutual and the plans and purposes underlying each conversational move (which are the factors driving the progress of the conversation in the Poesio and Rieser model).

Contrary to the Poesio and Rieser methodology, Ginzburg provides evidence from corpus data regarding clarification requests that plan recognition and joint acts are not a necessity for understanding an utterance and making it part of the common ground. The same data justify the need to differentiate information states (context) according to participant role in conversation. These data involve two uses of questions employing the utterance of fragmentary *Why?*-interrogatives. The first use, which Ginzburg calls *direct-why* interrogatives, is illustrated in (16). Here either the speakers themselves or the interlocutors can pose an elliptical *why*-interrogative to request an explanation for a fact introduced into the common ground by some previous utterance:

**Example (16)** A: Bo left yesterday.

A/B: **Why?** [ : *Why did Bo leave yesterday?* ]

The second use, termed as *why<sub>meta</sub>*, is illustrated below in (17):

**Example (17)** Cherrilyn: You got a pound?

Jessica: **Why?** [ : *Why does Cherrilyn ask if Jessica has got a pound?* ]

Cherrilyn: ch I mean in change

Jessica: no. [BNC, KBL, cited in Ginzburg 2012]

The interpretation of such elliptical *why<sub>meta</sub>* interrogatives involves a formalisation in the grammar of the phenomenon that Ginzburg characterises as ‘metacommunicative’ interaction, i.e. talk about the communicative process itself. A crucial element in this account is the adoption of TTR (see Sect. 28.1.2.1) as both the semantic representation language and the language in which the syntactic rules are formulated. This provides a uniform representational format allowing the reification of token locutionary and illocutionary speech-act events as they occur in the dialogue and the imposition of conditions on their occurrence (licensing). These representations of reified speech events can then be used as parts of the content of metacommunicative clarifications. For example, the event of Cherrilyn asking if Jessica has got a pound in (17) is recorded in the context (information state; as in cases like (6) earlier). It can then be used as the target argument of *why* ellipsis, i.e. asking why it has occurred, what was the interlocutor’s plan that motivated its occurrence. Thus, posing and understanding *why<sub>meta</sub>* queries involves interpreting the elliptical utterance *why?* as a query regarding the reason behind a speech act that has been performed recently, rather than querying the speech act’s content as in *direct-why* constructions. So, according to Ginzburg, *why<sub>meta</sub>* queries are used to clarify the goals underlying an utterance, i.e. the unpublicized intentions of the speaker, or in terms of the Poesio and Rieser (2010) account we discussed earlier, the plan motivating a speaker’s utterance.

This analysis provides then the requisite argument against assuming that recognition of underlying intentions or plans in discourse underpins successful utterance understanding. First of all, in various corpus research, it has been shown that clarification requests regarding the recognition of goals (intentions) are only a minute percentage in comparison to other types of clarification, e.g. those regarding difficulty with intended reference or confirmation that a word has been heard successfully. This undermines the Poesio and Rieser account or any other accounts based on the planning model (e.g. Grosz and Sidner 1986, where plan structure underpins discourse structure). This is because, if the execution of a joint plan was the force driving communication, such clarifications would be crucial and they would be expected to occur as frequently as all other cases. It could be argued that such intention recognition does not pose any problems; after all, the participants are

engaged in a joint plan, according to Poesio and Rieser. However, a second piece of evidence Ginzburg provides undermines this. All other types of clarification, or repair in general, tend to be almost invariably local to the problematic utterance, i.e. occurring in the next turn (except where nested repairs have to be performed in order, i.e. as a ‘stack’). Accordingly, Ginzburg treats the factors targeted by such local clarifications as pertaining to necessary contextual enrichments for an utterance to be comprehended (to be ‘grounded’). In contrast, for *why*<sub>meta</sub> clarifications, Ginzburg shows various attested cases where the successful integration of an utterance is accomplished, but where the *why?* query about intentions arises later in the conversation, after the problematic utterance has been comprehended and appropriately responded to:

**Example (18)** Norrine: **When is the barbecue, the twentieth?** (pause) Something of June

Chris: Thirtieth.

Norrine: A Sunday.

Chris: Sunday.

Norrine: Mm.

Chris: **Why?** [= ‘*Why do you ask when the barbecue is?*’]

Norrine: Becau Because I forgot (pause) That was the day I was thinking of having a proper lunch party but I won’t do it if you’re going out. [BNC, KBK, cited in

Ginzburg 2012]

**Example (19)** Cherrilyn: **Are you still** (pause) erm (pause) going to Bristol (pause) on Monday?

Fiona: Dunno.

Cherrilyn: No?

Fiona: I dunno. Doubt it, **why?** [= ‘*Why do you ask if I’m going to Bristol?*’]

Cherrilyn: I just wondered.

Fiona: **Why?**

Cherrilyn: I just wondered! [BNC, KBL, cited in Ginzburg 2012]

In the *why*<sub>meta</sub> clarifications above, the to-be-clarified utterance has been adequately comprehended and responded to; therefore, the target of the clarification cannot be an essential parameter in integrating utterances to the common ground.

In terms of grammatical analysis, given the otherwise standard syntactic model adopted (a variant of Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar, HPSG), different types of *why*-interrogatives are treated as hard-wired, distinct *constructions*, instead of linguistically underspecified elements, which is one of the crucial benefits which a TTR implementation, in our view, enables. Thus, Ginzburg postulates special grammatical types for fragmental *why*-interrogatives: in a rather unorthodox

fashion, an adverbial *why?* occurrence maps to a verbal phrase so that it can be assigned a sentential meaning, i.e. a meaning involving a proposition-like object.

The semantics that Ginzburg assigns to *direct-why* constructions, as in (20) below, involves interaction with recent facts recorded in the context. The meaning of a *why?* clause targets a fact  $f$  in the common ground and results in the question:  $? \lambda r. \textit{Cause}(r, f)$ ,<sup>4</sup> i.e. the speaker of such an elliptical *why*-interrogative seeks to clarify what the cause  $r$  is for some  $f$  in the common ground. But not any fact will be an appropriate antecedent. Ginzburg argues that the felicitous interpretation of such elliptical *why*-interrogatives requires that the set of facts (FACTS)<sup>5</sup> in the common ground is differentially structured according to each fact's relative saliency so that such facts can serve as antecedents to propositional anaphora. This is because of the interpretation of *why?* in data such as the following:

- Example (20)** A: Terrible weather recently.  
 B: But it's nice and sunny today.  
 A: Yes. **Why?**  
 [= '*Why is it nice and sunny today?*' But not: '*Why have we had terrible weather recently?*' ]

The interpretation of *why?* above in (20), as targeting the most local fact that has just been introduced in the common ground, shows, according to Ginzburg, that facts in the common ground are structured dynamically according to their saliency at each point in the conversation. This is handled by the postulation of a category TOPICAL that only includes facts that have just been accepted or queried that are currently under discussion in the conversation. The facts stored in TOPICAL change as the conversation proceeds and Ginzburg provides a modelling of such dynamics.

The analysis of such structures has further consequences from an interactional point of view. A standard assumption in formal semantics is that context (*common ground*) is viewed as an abstract entity to which both participants, speaker and hearer, have common access. However, examining the so-called elliptical *why<sub>meta</sub>* questions, Ginzburg draws different conclusions. Beyond the partitioning of each participant's information state to 'public' (Dialogue Gameboard) and 'private' parts, he argues that there has to be also a distinction according to what semantic objects are salient for the production of an elliptical utterance according to whether a participant is either speaker or hearer. This is motivated by the phenomenon termed as the Turn-Taking Puzzle (TTP, Ginzburg 1997, 2012), which is illustrated below:<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Despite the fact that Ginzburg uses the predicate *cause*, he talks about explanation as regards the content of the query which, in at least most cases, will involve, in our view, a notion of 'reason' rather than 'cause'. Note also that *question* is the semantic object contributed by, among others, interrogatives and employed in acts of *querying*. Questions are analysed uniformly as  $\lambda$ -abstracts in Ginzburg's account.

<sup>5</sup> Although it is crucial for Ginzburg's model to distinguish various semantic objects like propositions, facts, questions etc., for simplicity, consistency and brevity of presentation here we avoid to make these distinctions as they do not affect the general argumentation.

<sup>6</sup> The symbol # in front of an utterance/interpretation indicates pragmatic unacceptability.

**Example (21)** A: Which members of our team own a parakeet?

B: Why?

[(a) # ‘*Why own a parakeet?*’ (b) ‘*Why are you asking which members of our team own a parakeet?*’]

**Example (22)** A: Which members of our team own a parakeet? Why?

[(a) ‘*Why own a parakeet?*’ (b) # ‘*Why am I asking this?*’]

According to Ginzburg, the reading in which *why?* queries the reason behind the just performed speech act (the *why<sub>meta</sub>* reading, (21)(b) and (22)(b)) is only available when the turn changes and the new speaker B uses the *why*-interrogative (as in (21)). This reading is not available when the original speaker A keeps the turn (as in (22)). However, Ginzburg argues, this is not simply due to coherence or plausibility as regards the posing of such *why<sub>meta</sub>*-interrogatives of oneself, as this reading is available when expressed by non-elliptical means:

**Example (23)** A: Which members of our team own a parakeet? Why am I asking this question?

**Example (24)** A: Are you in cahoots with Tony? Why am I asking this?

Rather, this is because, according to Ginzburg, contexts are structured differentially for speaker and hearer, in that they do not have equal access to the salient semantic objects available in the context for ellipsis resolution. Moreover, this context dependence poses much higher demands in the structure of the context record than well-known cases of indexicality (*I, you, now, here*) since what is crucial here is also who made the PREVIOUS utterance.

However, despite the fact that Ginzburg claims that the restrictions affecting *why?* ellipsis resolution concern ‘semantic objects’, he does not reflect this solely in the semantics. Instead, he enshrines it in the syntactic component as a syntactic ambiguity, with two distinct structures for each interpretation of such fragments: *bare-why-clause*, for *direct-why* as in (16), (20) and (22), and *why<sub>meta</sub>* clause for the ones in (17)–(19) and (21). The derivation of both such clauses makes crucial reference to the context, i.e. the contents of the structured common ground. However, the licensing of *why<sub>meta</sub>* in particular ensures that the agent of the illocutionary act queried is distinct from the current user of the *why*-interrogative.

Notwithstanding these differences, both *why*-constructions involve unorthodox rules that map the adverbial *why* directly to a verbal phrase, in order to allow such fragments to head a sentence and stand as independent structures, as imposed by the need to mesh with other grammar rules. This is because Ginzburg assumes, as do Poesio and Rieser (2010), that the grammar is based on hierarchical syntactic structuring that concerns the string level, i.e. sentences. It is then because of this assumed level of NL structure, despite Ginzburg’s claim that such constructions are *not* syntactically elliptical, that the grammar must, nonetheless, involve unmotivated category-changing structural rules in order to successfully derive an appropriate semantics for such fragments. As a consequence, despite the substantial enrichment of the grammar to ensure integration of illocutionary force for each utterance event, interaction with context, and characterisation of metacommunica-



tive interaction potentials, the syntax still remains a component of the model qualitatively distinct from semantics. Various semantic/pragmatic-syntactic mismatches then require postulating structural ambiguities in order to make each component internally consistent. As a result, in our view, the potential that the employment of TTR representations affords, that of defining and resolving underspecified linguistic elements by combining them with elements from the context, is overlooked in favour of constructional ambiguity.

## 4 Grammar as Mechanisms for Incremental Interaction: Dynamic Syntax-TTR

In contrast, a more radical alternative concerning the status of the syntax/semantics components of the grammar is proposed by Dynamic Syntax (DS, Kempson et al. 2001; Cann et al. 2005). DS is a psycholinguistically inspired action-based formalism that specifies the ‘know-how’ that is employed in linguistic processing, in contrast to standard formalisms which codify (specifically linguistic) propositional knowledge of rules and representations. This model eschews a string-syntactic level of explanation and implements the assumption that grammatical constraints are all defined procedurally in terms of the progressive development of representations of content (‘information states’), with partial interpretations emerging step-by-step during social interaction on a more or less word-by-word basis. In the view we sketch here, this is a variant which combines DS with the TTR framework (Cooper 2005, 2012; DS-TTR), which captures directly the fine-grained dynamics of dialogue, as well as the potential for underspecification and enrichment (Purver et al. 2010). In the next section, we set out the case for abandoning standard conceptions of the grammar (i.e. syntax-semantics mappings). Ultimately, we argue, this involves a reconceptualisation of what NL knowledge consists in, namely irreducible ‘knowledge-how’, rather than propositional ‘knowledge-that’. We then present the application of the resources of this model to an account of split utterances and, finally, to the combination of split utterances with Ginzburg’s TTP (illustrated earlier in (21)–(23)) in order to explicate how the constructional view does not generalise so that relevant data remain unaccounted for. On this basis, we then draw conclusions as to the appropriate format of a fine-grained integrational model of NL use, which, in our view, incorporates various aspects of the interface with perception, action and sociality in a single architecture.

### 4.1 *Linguistic Knowledge: The View from the DS-TTR Perspective*

Standardly, the formulation of grammars abstracts away from ‘performance’, i.e. processing and pragmatics, as it is assumed that use of NL presupposes the ontologically and conceptually prior specification of propositional knowledge regarding

a syntactic theory and a theory of meaning. Thus, *syntax* is confined to the licensing of sentence strings as a means of delimiting the set of well-formed sentences of the language. As we saw earlier, for Ginzburg (2012) such an assumption motivates the necessary assignment of a sentential category to adverbial fragments like bare *why*-interrogatives, while in Poesio and Rieser (2010) this is what prevents their account from treating data like (7)–(9) as genuine co-constructions of a single sentence. As regards *semantics*, standardly, interpretation is defined as the application to the set of structured strings of a Tarski-inspired truth theory yielding propositions as denotations, this being the interface point at which the contribution of the grammar stops and pragmatics takes over. Despite their many innovations, linguists like Ginzburg (2012) and Poesio and Rieser (2010) seek to preserve these basic aspects of this conception of semantics, by distinguishing the constraints of syntax, semantics, and context, despite the unified representations assumed. From a philosophical point of view, neo-Davidsonians (e.g. Larson and Segal 1995) further assume that knowledge of NL includes tacit propositional knowledge of this truth theory; this tacit knowledge is what enables individuals to produce and interpret speech appropriately in interaction with others possessing the same tacit knowledge.

Consequently, instead of modelling the mechanisms enabling the joint actions individuals engage in during interaction, such theories concentrate in delivering DESCRIPTIONS of such actions, expressed as various propositional speech-act characterisations. As a consequence of this stance, classical truth-based semantic theories have enshrined Frege's context principle (Frege 1884) which holds that one should 'never ask for the meaning of a word in isolation, but only in the context of a proposition' (see e.g. Davidson 1967). Under such a view, it is only as they play a role in whole sentences that individual words or phrases can be viewed as meaningful. In our view, this is what motivates the necessity in most dialogue models, e.g. Ginzburg (2012) and Poesio and Rieser (2010), to analyse fragments of various semantic types that occur in dialogue as mapping to proposition-like semantic objects that correspond to explicit paraphrases of the perceived effects of such fragments. Standard speech-act theories have also embraced this view (see e.g. Searle 1969, p. 25). One of the reasons behind this stance is that the basic units of NL understanding are taken to be speech acts with propositional contents, as the minimal moves in conversation, and steps of inference, as expressed via either classical logical calculi or inductive generalisations, are invariably modelled as involving propositions as premises and conclusions (Gregoromichelaki 2013b). For the same reason, even pragmatic models like Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995) can only deal with propositions as providing sources of 'relevance', hence fragment analyses that employ this type of approach necessarily resort to propositional expansions again (e.g. Stainton 2006).

However, Davidson himself acknowledges that the individualistic psychological basis of this explanation of NL knowledge is inadequate:

...there must be an interacting group for meaning—even propositional thought, I would say—to emerge. Interaction of the needed sort demands that each individual perceives others as reacting to the shared environment much as he does; only then can teaching take place and appropriate expectations be aroused. (Davidson 1994, p. 16)

Under the standard competence-performance assumptions though, it is unclear how orthodox syntactic/semantic models can deal with the modelling of meaning as deriving from ‘interacting groups’ since, because of their fragmentary, non-sentential nature, dialogue data, like the ones illustrated in (1)–(24) earlier, are delegated as secondary, recalcitrant and degenerate uses to performance. Hence, a puzzle ensues: on the one hand, various researchers are now admitting that meaning originates in interaction; on the other, real interactions appear to furnish data that are incompatible with the postulates of standard theories of NL structure and meaning.

In our view, the problem standard syntactic theories have in dealing with dialogue data can be traced to the assumption that it is sentential strings and propositional readings that constitute the output of the grammar (compatible with the philosophical/semantic views that adopt Frege’s context principle), along with the attendant methodological principle debarring any attribute of performance within the grammar-internal characterisation to be provided. According to the DS perspective we take here, the problem starts with the overall requirement placed on NL models to provide accounts of ‘communication’, which is a concept still carrying the implications of the ‘code model’, according to which propositional messages are constructed in the mind of one interlocutor and then transmitted and decoded by the other. And this is an assumption that permeates most current accounts in formal semantics/pragmatics. Instead, within DS, we propose to reformulate the remit of grammars as the modelling of a set of unencapsulated, subpersonal mechanisms for action ‘coordination’, i.e. the meshing of (linguistic and non-linguistic) actions to achieve efficient joint performance, without necessarily requiring that explicit propositional representations have to be derived for the conceptualisation of speech acts or other actions as each step of coordination is being achieved. Crucial for such a conception of a processing model of the dynamics of coordination is that knowledge-how is involved at all levels of analysis, including ‘syntax’. Consequently, the standard view, the bifurcation of syntax and semantics/pragmatics, is rejected by DS. Instead, via employing a procedural architecture modelling joint action during language use, DS conceives of ‘syntax’, hence meaning, as underpinned by two features usually associated solely with psycholinguistic models of parsing/production, namely (a) incrementality and (b) fine-grained radical context dependence. These two features are argued to constitute the explanatory basis for many idiosyncrasies of NLS standardly taken to pose syntactic/morphosyntactic/semantic puzzles (see Cann et al. 2005; papers in Kempson et al. 2011a, b; 2012a, b; Gregoromichelaki 2006; Kempson et al. 2012; Gregoromichelaki 2013a, b). DS is formulated as a system which crucially involves:

- an action-based architecture that models dynamically the development of unitary representations integrating multiple sources of contextual information,
- word-by-word incrementality and predictivity within the grammar formalism, and
- speaker/hearer mirroring and complementarity of processing actions.

We will not go into the details of the formalism and the computations here;<sup>7</sup> for our purposes it suffices to look more closely at how this perspective, when applied to dialogue modelling, sheds new light on dialogue puzzles: the phenomenon of split utterances seen earlier in (1)–(5) and (6)–(15), which we take up in Sect. 4.2, and the interpretation of *why?* fragments (earlier in (16)–(24)), as we will see in Sect. 4.4.

## 4.2 *Incrementality and Predictivity in the Grammar Induce Split Utterances*

Instead of deriving sentence structures and propositional meanings, the DS grammar models the word-by-word processing of NL structures in context. For language use in conversation, this is a crucial explanatory factor since many of its features rely on such incremental production and comprehension. For example, the frequent occurrence of clarification requests in conversation (Ginzburg 2012 *inter alia*) shows that utterances can be processed and understood partially without having to map a sentential structure to a full proposition (*contra* Ginzburg 2012). Moreover, it has been shown that in conversation, the positioning of items like inserts, repairs, hesitation markers etc. is not arbitrary but systematically interacts with grammatical categories at a sub-sentential level (see e.g. Clark and Fox Tree 2002 *inter alia*). In addition, hearers display their comprehension and assessments of the speaker's contribution sub-sententially as the utterance unfolds, through *back-channel* contributions like *yeah*, *mhm*, etc. (Allen et al. 2001). And speakers shape and modify their utterance according to the verbal and non-verbal responses they receive from hearers as their turn unfolds (Goodwin 1981). Hence, the grammar must be equipped to deal with those in a timely and integrated manner, i.e. by providing syntactic licensing and semantic interpretation online. In addition, the turn-taking system (see, e.g. Sacks et al. 1974) seems to rely on the grammar, as it is based on the predictability of (potential) turn endings in order for the next speaker to time appropriately their (potential) entrance; in this respect, experimental evidence has shown that this predictability is grounded mostly on syntactic recognition rather than prosodic cues etc. (De Ruiter et al. 2006). More importantly for our concerns here, we have argued that, since the grammar manipulated by both interlocutors in dialogue is a set of reactive and anticipatory actions, the role of the hearer is not passive but, instead, actively responsive and complementary to the speaker's actions (Gregoromichelaki et al. 2011). Thus, in contrast to intentional planning models like Poesio and Rieser (2010), seen earlier in Sect. 2, we argue that incremental production induced by sub-personal grammatical mechanisms is adequate to account for how the interlocutors interact sub-sententially in dialogue to derive joint actions, meanings and syntactic constructions, taking in multi-modal aspects of the environment and feedback, a fact claimed to be a basic characteristic of interaction (Goodwin 1981).

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<sup>7</sup> We cite throughout the publications where the relevant formal details can be found.

The DS model assumes a tight interlinking of NL perception/production in that the grammar simply consists of a set of licensed actions that both speakers and hearers have to perform in synchrony in order to interpret or produce a step-by-step mapping from phonological strings to semantic representations consisting of formulae in the lambda-calculus.<sup>8</sup> As in DRT and related frameworks (see also Jaszczolt 2005; Jaszczolt et al., this volume), semantic, truth-conditional evaluation applies solely to these contextually-enriched representations, hence no semantic content is ever assigned to structures inhabited by elements of strings of words (sentences). The distinguishing feature of DS, as compared to DRT, is that this process of progressive building of semantically transparent structures is taken as core ‘syntax’. Unlike standard syntactic models, in DS, there is no intermediate level of syntactic structuring. Hence, strings of words are not assigned hierarchically organised constituency as phrases or sentences. Such constituency is considered in DS as epiphenomenal on the function-argument semantic relations as typified in the lambda-calculus analyses of NL meanings. In consequence, all syntactic dependencies have been reformulated in procedural terms, including, in particular, the classical evidence for denying the direct correspondence between NL structure and semantic content that led to accounts via transformations (long-distance dependencies, binding, quantification, etc.). Such phenomena have been shown to be explained by incorporating underspecification and its resolution within the syntactic dynamics (see e.g. Kempson et al. 2001; Kempson et al. 2012a, b; Cann et al. 2005; Gregoromichelaki 2006, 2011, 2013a).

According to DS, both speaker and hearer perform the processing steps incrementally, but, perhaps, in diverse contextual environments since the cognitive circumstances of each agent might be distinct. Given the fine-grained incremental DS architecture, efficiency (as well as psycholinguistic evidence) dictates that processing is not only strictly bottom-up, guided solely by the NL string, but also driven by *predictions* (‘goals’). These are expectations imposed by either the procedures associated with NL elements (‘lexical actions’) or system-generated as general top-down computational goals to be achieved in the next steps. Simplifying for presentation purposes, for example, in English, with its characteristic subject-verb-object (SVO) structure, a general computational goal will ensure that parsing/production starts with the expectation of a subject first, followed by a predicate afterwards. The lexical entries for transitive verbs will introduce not only the conceptual content associated with the word but also the prediction/expectation that an argument, the object, will follow immediately afterwards. And likewise for all other regularities occurring in English or any other NL ‘syntactic’ structuring: the actions associated with words will induce the appropriate processing steps and predictions. Thus, parsing in DS incorporates elements of production through the generation of predictions for what will ensue next. On the other hand, production exploits the parsing mechanism in that licensing of the generation of each word relies in checking that the string so far produced can deliver a conceptual representation that

<sup>8</sup> The language of the epsilon calculus is combined with the lambda calculus in order to deal with quantification, see Kempson et al. (2001); Gregoromichelaki (2006, 2011).

accords with the (partial) conceptual structure the speaker attempts to verbalise. As a result, speaker and hearer roles involve mirroring of each other's actions (Gregoromichelaki and Kempson 2013; Pickering and Garrod 2012).

As speakers and listeners simulate the actions of each other, the fulfilment of syntactic/semantic goals (predictions) is essential at each incremental step, sub-sententially, for both parser (hearer) and generator (speaker) and can be satisfied by either, whether on the basis of the other interlocutor's input or by recourse to the processor's own resources and context. As no structure is ever assumed to be derived for the sentence string, no whole-string 'grammaticality' considerations ever arise. Hence, fragments that can be processed by fitting into a structure that is already in the context are licensed directly, NOT as elliptical, without the assumption that they need to be enriched to a propositional type:

- Example (25)** A: Who left?  
 B: John  
 C: with Mary, yesterday.

Split utterances are then unproblematically processable and, in fact, a natural consequence of such a fine-grained bidirectional incremental system: As goals are constantly generated by the grammar, to be achieved symmetrically by both the parser and the producer, the hearer/parser can await for input from the speaker in order to fulfil these goals. However, according to the grammar, such goals are also what activates the search of the lexicon ('lexical access') in production in order to recover a suitable NL word for the concept to be conveyed. As a result, an initial hearer/parser who achieves a successful lexical retrieval before processing the anticipated NL input provided by the original speaker can spontaneously become the producer and take over verbalising the continuation of the utterance instead.

For this reason, from an interpretational point of view, DS predicts a much wider range of split-utterance types than Poesio and Rieser (2010) with their standard syntax-semantics articulation. The Poesio and Rieser model is perhaps able to cope with the type of split utterances termed *collaborative completions* as in (1)–(5) earlier. However, it is very much less compatible with the many other types of continuations in conversation. As (10)–(15), repeated below, show, such completions by no means need to be what the original speaker had in mind, so an account of their generation does not need to involve prediction at the message or semantic levels, just the ability of the original hearer to go on from the point at which parsing has stopped:

- Example (10)** Helen: I, I'm sure you're not a nutcase or a psycho or anything, it's just that, um I'm not, I'm not that good at, um you know, um...  
 James: Constructing sentences? [Sliding Doors]
- Example (11)** Helen: I love this bridge. My great grandfather helped to build it. I often come and... stand on it when I want to, um...  
 James: Build a bridge? I'm sorry [Sliding Doors]

**Example (12)** Connie: Clarence, I am looking for you! Where are you? I want to talk to you! Clarence?

<Connie bangs hard on cupboard's door where Clarence is hiding>

Clarence: Ah, Connie, splendid! Erm... Heard you calling. Wasn't able to find you, so I thought, what a capital idea to...

Connie: **Fling the servants' shoes around?** [Blandings:  
Pig-hoo-o-o-  
o-ey! BBC2  
14/1/13]

**Example (13)** (A and B arguing:)

A: In fact what this shows is

B: **that you are an idiot**

**Example (14)** (A mother, B son)

A: This afternoon first you'll do your homework, then wash the dishes and then

B: **you'll give me \$20?**

**Example (15)** Daughter: Oh here dad, **a good way to get those corners out**

Dad: **is to stick yer finger inside.**

Daughter: well, that's one way. [Lerner 1991]

From this point of view, coordination in dialogue does not require replicating thoughts in the interlocutors' minds but, instead, enabling each other to go on with the activity they are engaged in. Thus, these cases (termed *hostile continuations* or *devious suggestions* in Gregoromichelaki et al. 2011; Gregoromichelaki and Kempson 2013) and many others go against Levinson's (2012) assumption that mindreading is necessarily involved in NL action-coordination: there is no reason to suggest here that, before interrupting, the listener first figured out the speaker's plan, then derived the expected continuation, then rejected it, then figured out a new plan which resulted in an alternative continuation which he/she then produced, while the original speaker went through the reverse process in order to comprehend and integrate this continuation. Such data then cast doubt on the pervasive Gricean assumption, a residue of the code model, that in all successful acts of communication, the speaker must have in mind some definitive propositional content which they intend to convey to their hearer, whose task, conversely, is to succeed in grasping that particular content.

But even in cases where the continuation appears to be a 'guessing' of the original speaker's intention, in fact, as (7)–(9), repeated below, show, the string of words (sentence) that the completion yields is not at all what either participant would have planned from the beginning, so these cannot be licensed by a standard grammar:

**Example (7)** A: **Have you mended**

B: **any of your chairs?** Not yet.

**Example (8)** A: I heard a shout. **Did you**

B: **Burn myself?** No, luckily.

**Example (9)** Eleni: Is this yours or...

Yo: Yours.

[natural data]

To generalise over all cases, (1)–(5) and (7)–(15) earlier, we have argued that the original hearer is simply using a structural anticipation to take over and offer a completion that, even though licensed as a grammatical continuation of the initial fragment, might not necessarily be identical to the one the original speaker would have accessed had they been allowed to continue their utterance. And since the original speaker is licensed to operate with partial structures without necessarily having a fully formed intention/plan as to how the utterance will develop (as the psycholinguistic models in any case suggest), they can integrate immediately such offerings without having to be modelled as necessarily revising their original intended message (for detailed analyses, see Eshghi et al. 2010, 2011; Gargett et al. 2008, 2009; Gregoromichelaki et al. 2009, 2013a; Kempson et al. 2011a; Purver et al. 2006, 2009, 2011).

### 4.3 *Speech Acts in DS-TTR*

Unlike standard assumptions in Poesio and Rieser (2010) and other planning models, where an intended speech act, assertion, query, request, etc. has to be recorded in the common ground to achieve the appropriate understanding of an utterance, we believe that such necessary derivation is not part of the usual interpretation process, hence NOT part of the grammar. Also, in contrast to Ginzburg (2012), who does not employ intentional categories but, nevertheless, requires a one-to-one default mapping between linguistic forms and illocutionary forces, DS does not impose the derivation of an explicitly represented speech-act type for every utterance (see also Sperber and Wilson 1995, p. 244). Instead, speech-act characterisations are optional inferences and in DS-TTR they are implemented as such (see, e.g. Purver et al. 2010; Eshghi et al. (subm) Gregoromichelaki, to appear). This is because it is assumed that the linguistically provided information must be highly underspecified, namely just an indication of sentence mood as, e.g. declarative, interrogative, imperative, so that participants can negotiate and derive the significance of their actions jointly. In DS, such specifications are translatable into semantic features, e.g. inclusion or not of the actual world in the evaluation of truth conditions (see, e.g. Huntley 1984; Farkas 1992; Gregoromichelaki 2006, 2011) or the employment of distinct semantic objects as in Ginzburg (2012), Portner (2004). Following Poesio and Rieser (2010, see Sect. 2), we also have argued for the inclusion of micro-conversational events in the TTR representation (Purver et al. 2010), since these are concrete features of the discourse situation that underpin various (sub-sentential) contextual effects on meaning like shifts of the world of evaluation in metarepresentational cases, conditionals, etc. (Eshghi et al. (subm) Gregoromichelaki 2006, 2011, to appear). Hence, the performance of sub-sentential locutionary acts by participants is recorded incrementally in the grammar model, which is an operation required for purposes like the assignment of referents to indexicals like *I*, *you*,



*here* and *now*. Such micro-events are essential for the modelling of split utterances, where, as we saw earlier in (7)–(9), such indexicals switch reference mid-sentence.

Further than that, we suggest that the performance of (conventionalised) illocutionary speech acts by various linguistic means (*mood*) is achieved by (subpersonal) use-neutral procedural instructions<sup>9</sup> following the *functions* of such grammatical devices as described in e.g. Millikan (2005, Chaps. 8 and 9). Such functions are conceptualised as reproducible patterns of activity involving the complementary contribution of both speaker and hearer in order to be accomplished. In contrast to the view taken by Ginzburg (2012), in our view, many basic linguistic representations are not inherently differentiated along the descriptive/directive divide (Millikan 2005, Chap. 9), but can become so differentiated through explicit conceptualisation of their function, as it happens in cases of metacommunicative interaction. As argued in Gregoromichelaki (to appear), Eshghi et al. (subm) such functions can be implemented via adopting mechanisms of context update as in Beyssade and Marandin (2006), which modify the commitment record of speaker/hearer after each utterance has been performed. In our view, crucially, such mechanisms do not require, in addition, the involvement of personal, intentional mechanisms attributing mental states to interlocutors in order for their function to be accomplished; in our view, such attributions can be accomplished only derivatively (see also Pickering and Garrod 2004, 2012). In contrast to Ginzburg (2012) who, even though he has set out all the necessary mechanisms for the requisite underspecification, in addition employs default illocutionary-force descriptions, we do not assume that explicit conceptual descriptions of what the participants are doing in the conversation have to be encoded in the common ground in terms of a range of pre-specified speech acts that the speaker, or the grammar, imposes. This hard-wired encoding of speech acts is likely to cause problems for the data that concern us in this chapter. For example, the grammar might assign default assertive force to an utterance; however, a subsequent *why?* question, more plausibly queries, and hence establishes, the actual speech act that has been performed:

**Example (10)** A: (Let me remind you who is the boss around here!) You leave town tonight. And when you're gone, you stay gone, or you be gone.

B: Right, o.k. (But) why?

[‘*Why are you ordering me to leave town tonight?*’/ ‘*Why should I leave town tonight?*’/ #‘*Why are you asserting I leave town tonight?*’]

**Example (11)** [Context: Mary, seeing Peter about to throw a snowball, says threateningly:]

Mary: Yeah, just you dare. Go on. Throw it.

Peter: Why? What are you gonna do?

<sup>9</sup> Whether there are “grammaticised” associations between moods/grammatical devices and speech acts is an empirical issue to be decided on a language-by-language basis.

[# ‘*Why are you ordering me to throw it?*’/ ‘*Why are you threatening me?*’]

[adapted from Wilson and Sperber 1988]

In our view, the range of actions that can be performed with verbal means is culturally specific (see also Wong, this volume), indefinitely extendible and negotiable; and there is no reason to assume that explicit linguistic or conceptual descriptions can be derived for the precise effect of each utterance, especially if these have to be considered as, even weak, defaults. However, this is not to preclude inferential reasoning about the nature of the speech act where warranted, for example, where participants have conceptualised such actions as in the occurrence of explicit performatives (or other evidence of ‘metapragmatic’ awareness) or, more implicitly, where trouble arises and inferential procedures have to be employed that require the conceptualisation and description of the discourse situation. Indeed, as the DS formalism is designed to interact with context incrementally at any point, the possibility of deriving action/attitude attribution or planning exists as an optional inferential mechanism. Moreover, crucially, such procedures can be invoked at any sub-sentential point during an utterance, instead of being considered ‘root-clause’ phenomena. In our view, a processing architecture, the ‘grammar’, should enable these inferences when the appropriate function of a turn is at issue (e.g. in practices of ‘repair’ or when one is being held ‘accountable’ and has to conceptualise what they have been doing), but they are not required for intelligibility or the determination of grammaticality. Such speech-act descriptions are also derivable retrospectively: for example, as a result of an interlocutor’s feedback, one can assign a particular force (even to one’s own contribution) that had not occurred to them beforehand.

As an illustration, consider that continuations in split utterances, besides being the continuation of the other’s utterance, can also perform diverse functions (see also Purver et al. 2009). In (26), B’s continuation seems to function as a clarification of A’s intended query as well as a continuation of that query, which can be in effect a request for giving back an item that belongs to A. The hearer’s response (as e.g. in (27)) will determine whether all, some, or none of these characterisations obtain:

**Example (26)** A: Did you give me back

B: your loppers? They are there, take them.

**Example (27)** A: No I meant the secateurs. / I don’t want them anymore, I was just asking. / Thanks!

Others have pointed out that continuations can function as, e.g. adjuncts (Fernandez and Ginzburg 2002) or clarification requests (Purver et al. 2003). In all these cases, underspecification of the speech act initiated by a speaker is crucial for deriving the negotiable nature of the actions performed jointly in conversation. Given the sequential context (as described also in Conversation Analysis, see, e.g. Schegloff (2007)), and goals to be fulfilled by the participants (as provided by the procedural analysis of NL input as modelled in DS), multiple speech acts can be performed by the use of a single grammatical construction shared across turns between interlocutors:

- Example (28)** A: Go away  
 B: **and if I don't** [Antecedent of conditional threat; Continuation; Query]  
 A: **I'll smash your face** [Consequent of conditional threat; Continuation; Reply; Prediction etc.] [natural data]
- Example (29)** Freddie (who fancies the boss's daughter): I didn't know **you** were...  
 Mike (who goes out with boss' daughter): **banging the boss' daughter?**  
 [Completion/Clarification/Assertion (informing)/Challenge/Provocation] [Cemetery Junction]

Notice that these are not just cases of 'one action being the vehicle for another' (or *indirect speech acts*) as identified by, e.g. Levinson (2012) and Schegloff (2007). Here multiple actions are performed during the unfolding of a single propositional unit and, in our view, there is no definitive description that conceptualises what the participants are doing at each sub-sentential point in order to fit it within a range of pre-specified speech-act characterisations (contra Searle's *principle of expressibility*, Searle (1969, p. 18, 1979, p. 134)). Neither is it necessary to assume that first a very general illocutionary force is derived, e.g. assertion, query etc., and then further inferences are drawn to modify or further specify what happens in actual use. Such solutions usually lead to incompatible assignments of forces (see e.g. Asher and Lascarides 2001).

What we have just described shows that in an appropriate sequential environment, co-construction can be employed for the (implicit) performance of speech acts without first establishing propositional contents. However, we have argued, even further than this, that not only propositional/subpropositional contents but also the unarguably sub-personal mechanisms of the grammar itself can be utilised for the performance of speech acts (Gregoromichelaki 2013b; Gregoromichelaki et al. 2013b). Based on the fact that syntax and interpretation are both conceptualised in DS as a single action system, actions in dialogue can be accomplished just by establishing 'syntactic conditional relevances', i.e. exploiting the grammatical dependencies themselves to induce a response by the listener (*grammar-induced speech acts*). In the following, for example, incomplete syntactic dependencies can be initiated by a speaker inviting the hearer to fulfil them, thus forming, e.g. a query–answer pair during the derivation of a single proposition (see also Jaszczolt et al., this volume):

- Example (30)** A: **Thank you mister...**  
 B: Smith, Tremuel [natural data]
- Example (31)** A: **Shall we go to the cinema or...**  
 B: let's stay at home [natural data]
- Example (32)** A: **And you're leaving at...**  
 B: 3.00 o'clock

- Example (33)** Man: and this is Ida  
 Joanna: and she was found?  
 Man: she was found by a woman at Cheltenham. [Catwoman]
- Example (34)** A: And they ignored the conspirators who were...  
 B: Geoff Hoon and Patricia Hewitt [radio 4, Today programme, 06/01/10 ]
- Example (35)** Hester Collyer: It's for me.
- Example (36)** Mrs Elton the landlady: And Mr. Page?
- Example (37)** Hester Collyer: is not my husband. But i would rather you continue to think of me as Mrs. Page. [The Deep Blue Sea]
- Example (38)** Jim: The Holy Spirit is one who gives us?  
 Unknown: Strength.  
 Jim: Strength. Yes, indeed. The Holy Spirit is one who gives us?  
 Unknown: Comfort. [BNC HDD: 277–282]
- Example (39)** George: Cos they <unclear> they used to come in here for water and bunkers you see.  
 Anon 1: Water and?  
 George: Bunkers, coal, they all use coal furnace you see... [BNC, H5H: 59–61]

There is no reason to suppose here that the speakers had a fully formed propositional message to convey before they started production, in fact these formats exactly contradict various assumed direct [speech act ↔ syntax] mappings as in Ginzburg (2012). Moreover, in some contexts, invited completions of another's utterance have been argued to exploit the vagueness/covertness/negotiability of the speech act involved to avoid overt/intrusive elicitation of information:

- Example (40)** (Lana = client; Ralph = therapist)  
 Ralph: Your sponsor before...  
 Lana: was a woman  
 Ralph: Yeah.  
 Lana: But I only called her every three months.  
 Ralph: And your so your sobriety now, in AA [(is)]  
 Lana: [is] at a year.  
 Ralph: A year. Well, I'm not perhaps the expert in this case at all. However, I must admit that you're still young in (.) sobriety and I think that maybe still working with a woman for a while might be  
 Lana: Yeah  
 Ralph: in your best interest. [Ferrara 1992]

Here the therapist uses an invited completion in a way that gives the patient the opportunity to assign it the force of a query or not and hence to reveal or not as much information as she is willing to reveal.

As argued in Kempson et al. (2009a, b) and Gregoromichelaki et al. (2011), what is essential in accounting for all these data, along with 'disfluencies' which abound in actual conversation (see earlier example (1)), is an incremental grammar

that models the parallel course and common mechanisms of parsing/production at an appropriate sub-sentential/sub-propositional level. Along with other researchers, we have suggested that intentions/plans should not be seen as causal factors driving coordination but, instead, as discursive constructs that are employed by participants, as part of a (meta)language regarding the coordination process itself, when participants need to conceptualise their own and others' performance for purposes of explicit deliberation or accountability when trouble arises (see Mills and Gregoromichelaki 2010, for experimental evidence). One such device, we argue, are *why*-interrogatives to which we turn next.

#### 4.4 *Why?-Interrogatives and the (Split-)Turn-Taking Puzzle*

In our view, *why*-interrogatives, even when they appear to simply request the provision of a cause for an event/phenomenon, have most frequently the function of requesting an account for some previous action (as argued also in Bolden and Robinson 2011; Robinson and Bolden 2010). Since, usually, this is a dispreferred option in discourse, this would explain their infrequency and non-locality as established in Ginzburg (2012). In the following, two friends are discussing the name Lea gave to her daughter. She is worried that the English pronunciation “Rachel” (in line 4) might not be acceptable by the religious Jewish community in which they live. The *why?* fragment is used to challenge this attitude:

- Example (41)**
1. ZIV: What're you calling her.
  2. (.)
  3. ZIV: You don' kno[w (yet).]
  4. LEA: [ Ra]chel.
  5. (0.8)
  6. ZIV: ↑ That's cu:[:te. ↓]
  7. LEA: [Mm hm];,
  8. ZIV: .hhh That's cu:te,
  9. LEA: I hope. **I hope it sticks.** Eh hh ((laughter))
  10. ZIV: **Why:** [ 'Why do you HOPE it sticks' / 'Why are you saying you hope it sticks' / 'Why should it (not) stick' 'Why are you laughing?' etc.]
  11. (.)
  12. ZIV: You dec[ided before? ]
  13. LEA: [I don' know 'cause it's an] English na(h)me. =h
  14. ZIV: .hhhh So:;
  15. LEA: .hh So you [never know.]
  16. ZIV: [You're thuh mothe]r,
  17. LEA: Yeah that's true.
  18. (0.5) [Excerpt 5 (CF 4889) from Bolden and Robinson 2011, our comments]

Unlike Ginzburg's ambiguity analysis (see Sect. 3) which seeks to establish a clear-cut distinction between two categories of elliptical *why?* fragments, i.e. querying the reason behind a recently performed speech act versus request for provision of a cause for its propositional content, in many cases as in (41) above, and in (42)–(44) below, it is indeterminate which, if any, of the two is the case:

- Example (42)** CAI: Ho:ld on. lemme get my paper, >.h< There was a uh:m  
(.) .mтч a:rticle in tuh paper about you toda:y,  
ROB: .mтч=.hhhhh hhhhh **That's not good**,  
CAI: **Why**::, [*'Why is it not good?'* / *'Why are you saying it's not good?'*]  
(1.0)  
ROB: 'Cau:se.  
(0.2)  
CAI: 'Cause what.  
ROB: .hhhh I's not.=h  
(2.2)  
CAI: You don' even know what it sa:id.  
ROB: We:ll, (0.3) .hhhh (.) I'm not there to defend myself so hh hh  
CAI: It was a good article,  
ROB: Eh::=h  
CAI: I'll tell you in a second once I fi:nd what=you're lookin' for here.  
[Excerpt 6 (CH 6100, adapted from Bolden and Robinson 2011, comments in italics ours)]

**Example (43)** A: Sorry!

B: **Why?**

**Example (44)** Woman: Salvo?

Salvo: yes?

Woman: always the cop

S: **Why?** [*'Why (are you saying) "always the cop"'*]

W: you asked all the questions, you told me nothing about yourself

S: what's to tell? [translated from Italian, Inspector Montalbano, Season 3, Episode 2]

In many cases, there is no reason why the interlocutors should be presumed to have to resolve the vagueness involved in such questioning. However, this resolution is grammatically imposed as an unavoidable condition on understanding and response in Ginzburg's bifurcation into two distinct constructions. Moreover, despite the assumed conventional arbitrariness of 'constructions', as can be seen in (44), such phenomena occur crosslinguistically, which indicates rather the involvement of more general mechanisms. In addition, the assumptions underlying the postulation of a separate *why<sub>meta</sub>* reading occur freely in other 'constructions', which indicates that the phenomenon needs general treatment:

**Example (45)** A: Since we're here in the Olympic velodrome, do you fancy another lap?

B (panting): Really? OK then [*'Are you really asking me if I fancy another lap?'*]

Further evidence pointing in the same direction comes from *why*-ellipsis cases where a linguistic antecedent is absent. Despite the fact that Ginzburg provides rules for *why*-ellipsis resolution that require the presence of linguistically derived content, matching a salient fact accepted in the common ground, *why* fragments can very naturally query salient non-verbal actions or contents that do not directly match the contents introduced in the common ground by some previous utterance:

**Example (46)** [Context: A comes in the room and punches B]

B: Why?

**Example (47)** A: this is great!

B: shrugs, winces

A: Why? What is not to like about college?

**Example (48)** Mary: What is that?!

John: It's a tyre lever.

Mary: Why? [# *'Why is this a tyre lever?'* / # *'Why are you asserting that this is a tyre lever?'*]

John (nodding towards the house): 'Cause there were loads of smackheads in there, and one of them might need help with a tyre.

If there's any trouble, just go. I'll be fine. [Sherlock Holmes, BBC, Season 3, episode 3]

**Example (49)** A: I feel it's the right thing to do. It's the reason I'm here.

B: Why? To shame us over events best relegated to history?

**Example (50)** A: I lost you

B: Why, were you following me? [The Quiller Memorandum]

**Example (51)** Dobri: I gave my life to Janus. But now it's here... ..and I... I want to keep my shitty life

Becky: Why? You think he's going to kill you? [Utopia, Channel 4, Series 2, Episode 6]

**Example (52)** A: I've got a date!

B: Oh GOD!!!

A: Why? What?

**Example (53)** A: You're from Yorkshire, aren't you?

B: Why?

A: You walk into rooms and sit down in them

Ginzburg's account cannot deal with data like those in (46)–(53) because the grammar is distinguished from general contextually-dependent action. As a result, the lexical entries for *why*-fragments make reference to the presence of a *sign* (i.e. an object with phonological and grammatical features) in order to be able to license the occurrence of *why*?. But no such sign has occurred in (46)–(53). And even though (46)–(47) could be dealt with the *genre-accommodation* operations Ginzburg defines to coerce a proposition in the common ground, the constructional articulation of the grammar prevents the data from actually being able to be so handled: under the constructional approach, which makes reference to linguistic 'signs', they could not be handled in principle because it does not sound plausible that the accommodated proposition would need to be accompanied with the full phonological/syntactic features of a potential utterance that never occurred. In contrast, according to our action-oriented DS approach, the grammar is not concerned with defining linguistically pre-specified context conditions for such resolutions. This is because in all cases of language use, the context is constructed on the fly by the interlocutors themselves, so all conceptualisations and articulations of content, even the most mundane lexical choices, once constructed, put forward assumptions as 'presupposed'. Therefore, the grammatical specifications need to be able to facilitate such meshing with non-verbal actions, the material circumstances, and inferentially-derived contents without the need to distinguish 'accommodation' techniques for 'exceptional' uses. What is presented as 'accommodation', according to us, is the usual case in conversation. Accordingly, because DS eschews a separate syntactic level of licensing, it defines morphosyntactic constraints with reference to semantic properties. Hence, there is no problem arising as to how 'accommodated' propositions can be the source of coherence for fragmental sub-sentential elements (for the same point regarding ellipsis in general, see Gregoromichelaki 2012; Kempson et al. to appear).

The same approach can be taken, it seems to us, for the main claim in Ginzburg's analysis of the TTP. His description of this phenomenon relies on data discussed in Sect. 3 earlier (see examples (21)–(24)) that certain readings are unavailable according to whether the user of the *why*?-fragment was previously the speaker or not. These data are repeated below, summarised in a simplified manner:

**Example (54)** A: Which members of our team own a parakeet?

B: **Why?**

(a) *why*<sub>direct</sub> reading: # 'Why own a parakeet?'

(b) *why*<sub>meta</sub> reading: 'Why are you asking which members of our team own a parakeet?'

**Example (55)** A: Which members of our team own a parakeet?

A: **Why?**

(a) *why*<sub>direct</sub> reading: 'Why own a parakeet?'

(b) *why*<sub>meta</sub> reading: # 'Why am asking this?'

**Example (56)** A: Which members of our team own a parakeet? **Why am I asking this question?**



First of all, we contend that the alleged missing readings are not impossible, especially when the queried previous speech act is not itself a query:

**Example (57)** A: *Piss off.* *Why?* Probably because I hate your guts.

**Example (58)** Stop it! *Why?* Because I'm your boss, that's why!

**Example (59)** Careful! *Why?* Because you're clumsy that's why

**Example (60)** Fuck off! You know *why?* 'Cause none of you got the guts to be what you want to be.

**Example (61)** (In March) Merry Christmas! *Why?* Because I feel festive!

**Example (62)** [public prayer] God, thank You for my suffering. *Why?* Because I am being perfected in it.

**Example (63)** Davidson should have used more epitaphs. Epitaphs? *Why?*... Sorry, I meant epithets.

**Example (64)** Bo came to the party. Bo? *Why* on earth Bo now? Freudian slip, sorry.

But even with queries, as shown in (65), in multiparty dialogues, where the accountability for the speech act just performed is manifestly joint, these readings can occur:<sup>10</sup>

**Example (65)** Mum to Dad: Ask your daughter where she was tonight.

Dad to Daughter: Where did you go tonight? <Turning to Mum>  
*Why?* [= '*Why are we asking her this?*'] What has she done now?

In our view, even though some such readings have the flavour of 'rhetorical questions' (i.e. queries for which it is not really implied that the speaker does not know the answer, or where the speaker does not request information from the hearer), it seems to us that, e.g. (57) does not require such a reading any more than does (56), Ginzburg's example showing the viability of the alternative reading when a full *why*-interrogative is used. Moreover, if we assume that in general the reason motivating a speaker's utterance cannot be an issue salient enough in the context, how do we explain the implicit propositional argument of *because* explanations following perfectly felicitously, and with high frequency, any type of utterance:

**Example (66)** Are you in fact going to the funeral? Because I heard you won't.

In fact, one can claim that it is the aptitude of such follow-up explanations that makes *why<sub>meta</sub>* queries redundant in most cases, not any inherent grammatical constraint.

But further than this, when the TTP test is applied to split utterances, it appears that distinct empirical results are obtained: given a turn posing a query but split between two interlocutors, the possible interpretations of a subsequent *why?* depend not only on the most recent *SPEAKER* but also on who can be taken as the agent ac-

<sup>10</sup> Multi-party dialogue data that, in our view, indicate similar results were also noted in Ginzburg (1998) but were taken as leading to distinct conclusions.

countable for the speech act performed, which, in these cases, might be a role distinct from the notion of ‘speaker’ that is tracked by indexical pronouns like *I* and *my*:

- Example (67)** A to C: Have you finished sharpening (his)...  
 B to C/A: my loppers?  
 B to A: **Why?** [‘*Why are you asking C whether C has finished sharpening B’s loppers?*’]  
 A to B: Because I want her to sharpen my secateurs too.

Such data, what we have called the (Split-)Turn Taking Puzzle (STTP), are beyond the explanation of the TTP in Ginzburg (1997, 2012) because, in our view, Ginzburg’s grammar does not incorporate a notion of incrementality, with context updates at each word-by-word stage, as a fundamental feature in the architecture of the model.

In order to integrate optional speech-act information, in Purver et al. (2010), we have assumed that the DS apparatus manipulates representations in the TTR language. This is because TTR provides a multidimensional representational format with a well-defined semantics as developed in Cooper (2005, 2012) and Ginzburg (2012). Moreover, through its notion of subtyping, TTR allows the manipulation in the grammar of underspecified objects, through partially specified types, which can be progressively specified/instantiated as more information becomes available. As a result, it becomes possible to articulate highly structured models of context, where uniform representations of multiple types of information can be supplied and their interaction modelled (see e.g. Larsson 2011). In addition, TTR employs a general type-theoretic apparatus with functions and function types so that standard compositional lambda-calculus techniques are available for defining interpretations, thus capturing the systematicity and productivity of linguistic semantic knowledge. When combined with a grammar formalism in which ‘syntax’ itself is defined as a set of actions, strict word-by-word incrementality of semantic content representations becomes definable, enabling the maximum amount of semantic information to be extracted from any partial utterance and represented as a record to which fields are added incrementally as more words are processed in turn. Furthermore, inference, as one of a range of operations, is definable over these subpropositional record types, so that TTR is particularly well-suited for representing how partial semantic information is stepwisely accumulated and exploited. And because types can be treated as objects in their own right, it also becomes possible to integrate the reification and manipulation of both contents and grammatical resources for metarepresentational/metalinguistic purposes (see Gregoromichelaki and Kempson, to appear). In our view, the latter is what is needed for making explicit the contents that are required in the resolution of fragmentary *why?*-interrogatives, and our explanation of STTP, consequently, also relies on such representations.

Like Ginzburg (2012), our explanation of the STTP puzzle takes the *why<sub>meta</sub>* interpretation as querying the intention/plan behind an agent’s speech act (locutionary or illocutionary). Following Poesio and Rieser (2010), in Purver et al. (2010), we have suggested that each word utterance induces the context record to be augmented with the inclusion of an event (a ‘micro-conversational event’ in Poesio and Rieser’s

terminology). Such event descriptions include discourse situation and participant information as well as who is uttering this particular word. This is the information that is standardly needed to account for the resolution of indexicals like *I, you, here*, etc. However, even though the grammar records who the utterer (the agent of the locutionary act) is for such purposes, note that our approach does not necessitate that illocutionary force and therefore intention/commitment information are available by default *prior* to the processing of an utterance such as a *why*-interrogative: instead, seeking to interpret such queries can be the trigger for optional (speech-act representation) rules to apply. Hence, this approach is perfectly compatible with the general view on ‘intentions’ as post-factum discursive constructs (see e.g. Suchman 2007) and the fact that conversational participants can negotiate the content of their speech acts, with speech-act assignments able to emerge retrospectively. Since, in our view, ellipsis resolution requires the potential for immediate representation of a salient feature of the context, the infelicity of the reading in (55) shows that, in these cases, the speaker’s plan behind their speech act is, in general, not a parameter salient enough that hearers need to consider to ground the utterance (as indeed Ginzburg (2012) notes). In contrast, what a speaker does, in terms of micro-conversational events (or indeed non-verbal actions) can be salient enough, as (46)–(47) show. If we assume such an explanation and consider the data in (65) and (67), the TTP then relates to who can be held accountable for performing the relevant act, and hence can be asked to justify their actions. However, unlike Ginzburg (2012), we do not wish to grammaticise such a fact, since, as the STTP, (67), and other cases show, the folk notion of ‘speaker’ as mapping directly to the role of the agent of the speech act is not adequate. Ginzburg himself contends with similar problems concerning the concept of ‘hearer’ in multiparty dialogue. And, as shown in Levinson (1988), the decomposition of the concepts of ‘speaker’ and ‘hearer’ for various purposes needs to be allowed freely as an option in the grammar.

For our concerns with the (S)TTP, in terms of Goffman’s (1981) distinctions among ‘speaker’ roles, the relevant agent is the ‘principal’. In (67), the utterer (the ‘animator’) of a completion (the final speaker in the general sense, and as indexed by pronouns like *my*) can felicitously ask elliptical *why<sub>meta</sub>*-questions of the original utterer, because although B’s fragment *my loppers?* completes A’s question, B does not necessarily assume responsibility for the performance of the illocutionary speech act. In fact, it is B’s *why?* question that can establish this fact in the common ground: its use shows to A and C that A is solely accountable for the query to C as B dissociates explicitly from it (it can be the same in (65) too). Now, A must be taken as the agent accountable for the querying speech act even though there is a sequence of utterance micro-events which A and B have performed severally to accomplish it. The availability of the *why<sub>meta</sub>* reading then follows, even though apparently in contrast to (55). In some cases, then, even though the turn is collaboratively constructed, the original speaker maintains the accountability for the turn even though it was completed by somebody else. In other cases, see e.g. (13)–(14) earlier, this is not the case: the eventual content derived has to be taken as solely attributable to the second speaker. And, in even other cases, e.g. in (7)–(9) earlier, this is indeterminate and not relevant to the processing of the dialogue. Hence, in our view, there is no reason for such specifications to be encoded necessarily as they would prevent an

account of continuations as such, i.e. as continuing what somebody else has so far offered, but making use of it perhaps in a new way.

In sum, we claim that the view emerging from such data is that an appropriately defined model should be able to provide the basis for direct modelling of dialogue coordination as an immediate consequence of the grammar architecture. Within this model, ‘fragmentary’ interaction in dialogue should be modelled as such, i.e. with the grammar defined to provide mechanisms that allow the participants to incrementally update the conversational record without necessarily having to derive or metarepresent propositional speech-act contents or contents of the propositional attitudes of the other participants (as in Poesio and Rieser 2010). In the exercise of their grammatical knowledge in interaction, participants justify Wittgenstein’s view that ‘understanding is knowing how to go on’ (Wittgenstein 1980), even on the basis of sub-propositional, sub-sentential input with no reasoning intervening. Metacommunicative interaction is achieved implicitly in such cases via the grammatical mechanisms themselves without prior explicit commitment to deterministic speech-act goals, even though participants can reflect and reify such interactions in explicit propositional terms if required. The fact that such reifications are possible, even though it requires that the dialogue model should provide the resources for handling them when they are conceptualised, does not imply that they operate in the background when participants engage in (unconscious, subpersonal) practices that can be described from the outside in explicit propositional terms. In parallel with Brandom’s (1994) conception of the logical vocabulary as the means which allows speakers to describe the inferential practices that underlie their language use, we believe that conversational participants manifest their ability to ‘make explicit’ the practices afforded to them implicitly by subpersonal procedures either when communication breaks down or when they need to verbalise/conceptualise the significance of their actions (for a similar account of practices at other higher levels of coordination, see Piwek 2011).

## 5 Conclusion

In conclusion, dialogue phenomena like fragmentary and split utterances are not phenomena of performance dysfluency but a diagnostic of essential properties of NL know-how. The problem standard syntactic theories have in dealing with dialogue data can be traced to the assumption that it is sentential strings with propositional interpretations that constitute the output of the grammar, along with the attendant methodological principle debarring any attribute of performance within the grammar-internal characterisation. We have argued here that such phenomena cannot be handled without radically modifying the competence-performance distinction as standardly drawn, even more radically in our view than the significant steps in this direction that Poesio and Rieser (2010), Ginzburg (2012), and others (see e.g. Peldszus and Schlangen 2012; Schlangen 2003) have already taken. We believe that the competence/performance methodology, far from being a harmless abstraction that will eventually seamlessly integrate with a unified explanation of the capacities that

underpin language use, turns out to have provided a distorted view of NL, resulting in a misleading formulation of the nature of knowledge required for understanding and production in realistic settings (for philosophical arguments supporting this view, see also Millikan 1984; McDowell 1998).

In the domain of semantics, work by Ginzburg (2012), Cooper (2012), and Larsson (2011), among others, presents a significant advance in that it does not restrict itself to the modelling of informational discourse but, instead, attempts to describe the fine-grained structure of conversational exchanges, explores the ontologies required in order to define how speech events cause changes in the mental states of dialogue participants (see also Poesio and Rieser 2010), and attempts to integrate perception and semantic conceptualisation in a unified framework (TTR). But, following standard assumptions, these models also define syntax independently (Poesio and Rieser 2010) and statically (Ginzburg 2012), which, in our view, prevents the modelling of the fine-grained incrementality observable in the split-utterance data. We believe that what is needed is a domain-general action-oriented model that accounts for both the sub-sentential, supra-sentential and cross-modal structure of an interaction (a *grammar*). This revision of what kind of knowledge a grammar encapsulates changes the view of the semantic landscape. The instrumental Davidsonian stance towards the content assigned to sub-sentential constituents, as subordinate to sentential contents, needs to be revised in that sub-sentential contributions provide the locus for as much, and as significant (externalised) ‘inference’ and coordination among participants, as any propositional contributions. From this perspective, the full array of dialogue data demands a grammar-internal characterisation, in that the licensing of the complete structure, and ultimately the discourse effects of such moves, relies on syntactic/semantic constraints. As a result, in our view, a uniform account of such data within the grammar itself can only be given with a shift of perspective into one in which NL knowledge is seen as action-based (procedural), i.e. a set of unencapsulated processing mechanisms.

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# The Metapragmatics of Direct Utterances

Tamar Katriel

**Abstract** This chapter revisits the analysis of the dimension of “directness” in language use as theorized within a socio-pragmatic perspective and as empirically explored within the ethnography of speaking. It draws on Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson’s seminal study of politeness strategies, which integrates Paul Grice’s approach to the logic of conversation and Goffman’s study of “facework” in social interaction, and on ethnographies of indirectness (Arabic *musayra*) and directness (Israeli *dugri* speech) as culturally inflected ways of speaking whose study brings out the social regulation and cultural codification of indirect and direct talk. Further exploring the cultural warrants that legitimate the use of directness in the case of asymmetrical power relations, the analysis incorporates Foucault’s discussion of the ancient Greek metapragmatic notion of *parrhesia* (fearless speech). In so doing, it highlights the performative, defiant role of direct utterances in the rhetoric of sociopolitical protest.

**Keywords** Socio-pragmatics · Politeness · Pragmatics and culture · Directness

## 1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the dimension of “directness,” which encompasses speech phenomena ranging from talk identified—by both speakers and analysts—as direct or indirect. In what follows, I use the term “directness” (and its counterpart “indirectness” or “indirection”) as umbrella terms for a number of complexly related cognitive and social aspects of speech conduct that signal speakers’ claim to the truthfulness of their utterances. Such claims, whether explicit or implicit, whether bona fide or not, are part of speakers’ sense of the things one can do with

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particular types of words as well as their presentation of self in social interaction. Ethnographic studies have pointed to the centrality of the directness dimension in the speech economies and social arrangements of various speech communities and to the intricate politics of revelation, concealment, and intentionality that metapragmatic references to either directness or indirectness imply (e.g., Albert 1972; Ochs Keenan 1989; Katriel 1986; Griefat and Katriel 1989; Hendry and Watson 2001). Philosophers of language have been mainly concerned with the interpretability of verbal utterances as encoding speakers' intentions and as governed by the linguistic codes that regulate language use.

The exploration of the dimension of directness in language use thus brings into conversation the work of philosophers, sociologists, and anthropologists interested in language as a vehicle of individual expression, as a form of social action, and as a product of both the dynamics of social interaction and the cultural contexts in which it is embedded. The directness or indirection assigned to an utterance relates to the degree of transparency attributed to it as an articulation of the speaker's communicative intentions, and as an expression of his or her "truth." The speech activity of truth-telling can be performed either directly as in confrontational acts of open critique or indirectly as in the use of irony. The intricate relationship between the directness dimension, claims to truth-telling, and the cultural values attached to telling the truth, maintaining social relationships, and cultivating the aesthetics of artful expression all render the study of the directness dimension a particularly intriguing challenge.

Studies within the philosophy of language, which explore the semantics and pragmatics of utterances identified as either direct or indirect, are largely marked by a concern with the representational function of language and a cognitive focus on meaning, intention, and interpretability. Directness is discussed in terms of the notions of literalness, explicitness, or transparency (and their counterpart notions of figurativeness, ambiguity, or opaqueness). Transparency and opaqueness relate to interlocutors' ability to encode and interpret each other's communicative intentions by attending to the form and context of their utterances. Studies of direct or indirect talk in linguistic pragmatics—concerned as they are with the meaning of utterances in context—interpret directness as involving a range that moves between transparency at one pole and implicit meanings at the other. Thus, for example, in Dascal's (2003) account, an utterance is transparent when the default, immediate interpretation given to it is not blocked. Its blocking gives rise to indirectness, i.e., to further interpretive moves that reveal meanings that are not explicitly or literally stated.

In what follows, however, my focus is on socio-pragmatic approaches proposed for the study of the dimension of directness, which highlight the role of social norms and cultural meanings that ground the use of direct and indirect strategies in speech behavior. While not unconcerned with questions pertaining to the interpretability of utterances, language-oriented ethnographers have been mainly concerned with their social and relational meanings and uses. The research agenda of the ethnography of speaking as formulated by Hymes (1962) consists of a systematic attempt to theorize language use by combining close attention to empirical accounts of localized patterns of speaking and the sociocultural contexts of their enactment. The central

underlying assumption within this research program is that the use of speech forms and the construction of messages is shaped by locally coded rules of production and interpretation. The goal of theorizing within this perspective is to provide an analytic language for in-depth explorations as well as cross-cultural comparisons of naturally occurring social interactions and culturally recognized discursive formations. The directness dimension in language use has indeed provided a highly productive site for such analytically informed empirical inquiry.

Notably, strategies of indirectness—whether they involve hints, implicatures, or figurative speech—have attracted much more research attention than the study of the directness pole. This may be due to the fact that the use of strategies of indirectness is essentially enigmatic, raising issues of interpretability, as communicative intentions are not transparently conveyed in utterances that use strategies of indirectness. The social motivation for such usage was formulated by Goffman (1967) in his seminal microsociological study of “facework” in everyday interaction. Concerned with the ritual constitution of the interaction order, Goffman viewed interaction as a site for the dynamic enactment of verbal and nonverbal gestures of mutual recognition. In and through such gestures, interactants signal their concern (or disregard) for the self-images that participants seek to project in interactional encounters. Goffman regarded the social mandate to uphold one’s interlocutor’s face wants as the ground rule of all social interaction, a very condition for the possibility of mutual engagement.

Building on Goffman’s insights concerning the crucial role of facework in upholding the social-ritual order, as well as on Grice’s (1975) analysis of the logic of conversation, Brown and Levinson (1987) have developed a model for the cross-cultural study of linguistic politeness strategies, which is, in effect, formulated in terms of the directness dimension. They point to the tension between interpretability and facework, the cognitive and the social dimensions of speech. In so doing, they propose to expand the notion of conversational cooperation beyond cognitive-interpretive coordination in matching utterance meanings to their communicative intentions, and also attend to the ritual alignment that is encapsulated in Goffman’s notion of facework. In this view, since conversational cooperation requires both mutual understanding of utterance content and social alignment, the notion of conversational cooperation needs to be revised so as to include not only acts of understanding but also ritual acts of recognition.

The following section elaborates on the Brown and Levinson model as a basis for revisiting my earlier work on the directness dimension via ethnographic studies of the culturally inflected Israeli style of straight talk—natively known as *dugri* speech (Katriel 1986), which will be juxtaposed with the style of indirectness associated with the Arabic ethos of doing *musayra* (Griefat and Katriel 1989). I try to take my analysis further by problematizing part of the Brown and Levinson model while discussing the directness of *dugri* speech in terms of relations of power and the politics of protest. To demonstrate the productivity of this move, I incorporate into my account Foucault’s (2001) discussion of the ancient Greek notion of *parresia* (“frankness in speaking the truth” or “fearless speech”), exemplifying its analytic utility with reference to studies of Israeli soldiers’ protest rhetoric, concep-

tualized as a form of direct talk (Katriel 2009; Shavit and Katriel 2009; Katriel and Shavit 2011).

Revisiting directness, as undertaken in this study, is an opportunity to both rethink some old issues and explore some new terrain. Linking the study of directness to studies of the language of protest as a form of fearless speech will provide a more encompassing account of the socio-pragmatics of the directness dimension than has been so far proposed.

### **Directness and Politeness**

The most influential treatment of the social dimension of directness in speech appears in the aforementioned Brown and Levinson model of politeness strategies. As noted, this model combines Grice's cooperative principle according to which speakers assume that their interlocutors' conversational contributions are rational and efficient and a consideration of the ritual dimensions of social interaction as captured in Goffman's analysis of facework as interactional recognition.

As is well known, in Grice's original formulation, the maxims that make up the cooperative principle constitute background presumptions that conversationalists make concerning the conduct of conversation. They include four maxims that conversational participants assume each other to follow (unless otherwise indicated): (1) The maxim of quantity that requires the speaker to make his or her contribution to the conversation as informative as required for the current purposes of the exchange (and neither more nor less so) (2) The maxim of quality that requires conversationalists' contributions to be true—i.e., speakers are expected to avoid making statements contrary to their beliefs or for which they can provide no evidence if requested to do so (3) The maxim of relation that requires speakers' contributions to be relevant to the current exchange (4) The maxim of manner that is oriented to the efficiency of conversational exchanges, requiring speakers to be brief and orderly and avoid obscurity and ambiguity (Grice 1975).

In this scheme, when a speaker adheres to the conversational maxims, his or her talk is interpreted as rational and efficient, involving transparency in formulating messages and immediacy in interpreting them. In the terms of the present discussion—he or she can be said to be direct. Directness in communicative exchanges is thus related to participants' cooperation in meeting the presumptions that they speak the truth, keep to the point, refrain from producing overelaborate messages and avoid obscurity and ambiguity. When a speaker violates any of these maxims, this can be interpreted as opting out of the cooperative principle—and the possibility of conversational alignment—whether by choice or by default. Alternatively, the flouting of a maxim may still preserve the presumption of conversational cooperation by giving rise to an inference based on contextual information, i.e., to what Grice calls implicature.

Thus, for example, when a person known for his or her profound dislike of a particular food praises a dish of that food extravagantly, the hearer can either interpret this as a violation of the cooperative principle (i.e., lying) or as carrying an implicature based on the assumption that the speaker intends the statement to be interpreted as ironical. In the latter case, the speaker chooses to convey his or her

meaning indirectly so as to avoid making a disparaging remark that would express his or her true attitude of dislike of the dish.

Grice's mechanism of conversational implicature enabled him to account for the disparity between the propositional semantics of speakers' utterances and their pragmatically based meanings in conversation. While he posited a process that is pragmatic in nature, as it is anchored in various aspects of the context of utterances, Grice was not concerned with the social function of language as a vehicle for conveying expressive and relational meanings. Within his framework of analysis, expressing one's intentions via implicatures is one of the indirect ways in which utterances can be rendered meaningful, yet he did not ask what motivates speakers to convey their intentions indirectly rather than adhere to the conversational maxims and thereby maximize the efficiency of their communication. The cooperative principle is based on the assumption that cooperation facilitates the sharing of utterance meanings so that conversation can proceed properly. It posits an inferential mechanism through which this is done, but does not specify the social motivations or implications of either following (or not following) this principle.

Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness, which incorporates Grice's model of the person as a rational actor who chooses the means that will satisfy his or her ends, deals with the social dimensions of spoken exchanges rather than with the interpretability of utterances. It addresses speakers' social motivations for using conversational implicatures and other forms of "indirectness" in terms of Goffman's notion of face, one's publicly projected self-image, and elaborates on interlocutors' need to have their face ratified in and through social interaction. This need implies the essential vulnerability of face as it is ever dependent on the dynamics of social exchanges and requires conversational cooperation at the level of social relations. In Brown and Levinson's words:

Thus face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction. In general, people cooperate (and assume each other's cooperation) in maintaining face in interaction, such cooperation being based on the mutual vulnerability of face. (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 61)

The facework that interactional partners engage in is therefore, too, a form of cooperative action, generating mutuality in the ongoing, collaborative construction of social meanings and social worth in the context of conversational exchanges. Brown and Levinson draw finer distinctions in their analysis: (1) That between the public self-image that interactional partners claim for themselves and that which they accord to their interlocutors, and (2) two different types of face wants: (a) "negative face"—the desire for freedom of action and freedom from imposition, i.e., the desire for autonomy and (b) "positive face"—the desire to have one's self-image and preferences appreciated and approved, i.e., the quest for solidarity.

As the notion of face relates to the social relationships constructed through interactional cooperation, it adds important affective and ethical dimensions to the cognitively oriented questions of interpretability foregrounded by Grice, pointing to an expanded notion of conversational cooperation. The tension between the two interactional requirements—to attend to interlocutors' face wants through the use of indirectness and to regulate one's clarity of expression so as to enhance the

interpretability of utterances underscores the social negotiations involved in conversational interactions.

Such tension is inevitable in the case of verbal acts that inherently involve a violation of one's interlocutor's face wants, and which constitute what Brown and Levinson call face-threatening acts (FTAs). Frequently given examples of such acts are directives (whether orders or requests), which involve interactional imposition, thereby posing a restriction on the interlocutor's autonomy. As such, they violate the interlocutor's negative face wants. Open disagreements, too, can be seen as potential violations of the interlocutor's face as their display potentially undercuts mutuality and solidarity. As such, they involve violations of the interlocutor's positive face wants.

Thus, invoking the notions of "face," "face wants," "FTAs," and the distinction between positive and negative face, Brown and Levinson provide a systematic framework for the investigation of the linguistic strategies that speakers use in violating face wants, even while maintaining the flow of interaction. Their model posits that conversationalists usually construct their messages in ways that help them enhance, or at least maintain, their own and their interlocutors' face in social exchanges by employing a wide range of linguistically encoded politeness strategies that involve various forms of indirectness. The politeness strategies selected depend on the degree to which the interlocutor's face is threatened by the speaker's FTA. The weightiness of the FTA is computed by taking into account three independent social parameters—the social distance between speaker and hearer (*D*), the power differential between speaker and hearer (*P*), and the ranking of the imposition in the culture (*R*). The more highly ranked the imposition, the greater the social distance, or the greater the power differential between speaker and hearer, the more weighty is the FTA perceived to be. The weightiness of the FTA—as assessed in given social and cultural contexts—determines the choice of linguistic politeness strategies speakers make in attempting to minimize the threat they pose to their interlocutor's face. Choosing a politeness strategy commensurate with the level of affront potentially created by the use of the FTA performed assures the possibility of further interaction.

Not all uses of FTAs, however, are attended by the employment of redressive action that is encoded in the message design. At times, speakers may refrain from linguistically mitigating the FTAs they perform, speaking directly and saying it "like it is," and thereby ostensibly conveying disregard for their interlocutors' face wants. In Brown and Levinson's framework, the employment of FTAs without redressive action is the "bald-on-record" strategy. The bald-on-record strategy is transparent—explicitly and literally conveying the speaker's communicative intentions. It is also direct in interactional terms—avoiding hedging or other forms of message modulation, it signals disregard for interlocutors' face concerns.

Brown and Levinson define bald-on-record talk as "speaking in conformity with Grice's Maxims" (1987, p. 94). In using this strategy, a speaker tells the truth, makes his or her contribution relevant, brief, and orderly, avoiding obscurity and ambiguity. Within this analytic framework, the use of bald-on-record utterances is interpreted as unproblematic, transparent, and rule-governed communicative



conduct. However, within a facework model, avoiding the use of linguistic politeness strategies, and thus risking affront to the interlocutor's face, appears as interactionally problematic. Following a chain of reasoning that parallels Grice's argument whereby the flouting of conversational maxims gives rise to implicatures, Brown and Levinson argue that the violation of face wants in social interaction gives rise to implicatures concerning the precedence given to other types of wants and desires. In other words, while the use of linguistic politeness strategies constitutes a violation of conversational cooperation in terms of Grice's maxim of "effectiveness," it signals social cooperation, i.e., cooperation in terms of relational alignment.

In sum, within a cooperative model of social interaction—such as the one proposed by Goffman—which prioritizes facework as signaled (*inter alia*) by the use of linguistic politeness strategies, it is directness rather than indirectness that becomes problematized and calls for an account. While in this model indirectness is enacted in terms of politeness strategies shaped by the weight of FTAs and the relational contexts attending them, as described above, the use of directness is warranted by a set of culturally recognized circumstantial assumptions concerning conversationalists' motivations and social intentions. Not much is said about these cultural warrants, as the Brown and Levinson model is much more elaborate in its treatment of indirectness than directness (the 1987 book version of their paper accords the treatment of the bald-on-face strategy little more than six out of the over 300 pages).

The main example of a warrant for the use of directness anchors the social motivation for its use in the desire for efficiency—when the speaker “wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency *more than* he wants to satisfy H's [the hearer's] face” (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 95). Taking imperatives as an example, the claim is made that the desire for efficiency (real or metaphorical) provides a warrant for sidestepping the interlocutors' face wants in using nonhedged imperatives. Echoing Grice's accent on effectiveness, Brown and Levinson thus valorize efficiency and the sense of urgency with which it is associated, ascribing to it the role of a cultural warrant for the use of direct talk. This may well be the case in cultural contexts in which efficiency is regarded as a prime value, yet it seems clear that (1) such a value judgment is subject to situational and cultural variability, and (2) there may well be other cultural values that warrant the use of direct, bald-on-record utterances.

Brown and Levinson's model of politeness is couched in terms of individual acts and presents a dyadic act-by-act account of strategic interaction. However, they also propose to use this framework for the analysis of cultural ethos, which they define as “a label for the quality of interaction characterizing groups, or social categories of persons, in a particular society” (1987/1978, p. 243). This not only acknowledges diversity among groups but also moves the analysis beyond the level of individual acts, opening up the possibility of socio-pragmatic accounts of cultural communication styles. This level of cultural-linguistic approach, which takes the social group rather than the individual as its unit of analysis, is particularly pertinent to research in the ethnography of speaking. Within this approach, speech styles, or cultural ways of speaking (see below), are discursive articulations of cultural ethos. Brown and Levinson's brief discussion of the notion of ethos provides some pointers to the

ways in which such analysis may build on their politeness model, with reference to ethnographic studies that focus on what they call “the quality of interaction” in various speech communities.

Both the discussion of the group-level cultural ethos that grounds social interaction and the discussion of the bald-on-record strategy are underelaborated in the Brown and Levinson model. As I argue with reference to Arabic and Israeli speech cultures, the Brown and Levinson model helps us analyze directness at the level of cultural ethos, yet this analysis, in turn, throws into question some aspects of the model itself. I return to this model after a brief ethnographic detour in the next section.

## 2 Directness Within an Ethnographic Perspective

Ethnographers of speaking explore naturally occurring speech occasions as well as indigenous assumptions and norms associated with the conduct of speech in given speech communities. Hymes (1974) has proposed the notion of ways of speaking as a pivotal analytic term that mediates and encompasses reference to the means and forms of speech on the one hand and to their social and cultural meanings on the other. The identification of ways of speaking is not only a matter for analysts’ constructions; it is also part of vernacular cultural processes (Carbaugh 1989). Metapragmatic terms that designate speech styles, speaker roles, and speech occasions are routinely identified and often named by cultural members themselves, becoming part of local cultural lexicons that serve speakers as they discuss and assess speech performances. Such labels and commentaries are important interactional vehicles through which social life and speech culture are locally regulated and negotiated, and they also serve as crucial resources for language-centered ethnographies. Quite early on in the development of the ethnography of speaking, anthropologist Ethel Albert, in her study of the cultural patterning of speech in Burundi, included methodological advice to ethnographers, underscoring the importance of culturally marked metapragmatic terms. Recognizing that metapragmatic terms are used by speakers to thematize, evaluate, as well as problematize ways of speaking, speaker roles, and speech occasions, thereby providing productive points of entry for ethnographies of speaking, she commented that “talk about talk should be noted and inquiry directed at its explanation” (Albert 1972, p. 103). Indeed, over the years, the use of “talk about talk” as an empirical resource has become a hallmark of language-centered cultural inquiry. And as was indicated by Albert’s pioneering study of speech patterning in Burundi, metapragmatic terms related to norms associated with truth-telling and with forms of directness and indirectness in speech behavior are often central elements in culturally inflected social lexicons.

Taking such metapragmatic terms as my point of departure, I briefly revisit two earlier studies I have conducted of cultural ways of speaking that are metapragmatically designated in terms of the dimension of directness—doing *musayra* in Arabic and speaking *dugri* in Israeli Hebrew (Katriel 1986; Griefat and Katriel 1989).

Speakers of Arabic designate the pole of indirection as a culturally valorized speech mode by invoking the ethos of *musayra*, which involves humoring, accommodating conduct that is natively interpreted as going along with the other for the sake of social harmony. In the cultural world of native Israeli Jews, Sabra culture, it is the pole of directness, metapragmatically designated as *dugri* speech or straight talk, that is valorized. These culturally recognized poles along the directness–indirectness dimension point to the very different speech cultures of Arabs and Jews in Israel/Palestine and provide highly productive points of departure for cultural and cross-cultural explorations. I build on these empirical examples with a view to developing a more comprehensive discussion of the socio-pragmatics of directness than has so far been proposed. In so doing, I bring into conversation two very different theoretical frameworks that are relevant to the study of the directness dimension. I begin by drawing on Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model of politeness strategies discussed above and supplement it with Michel Foucault’s metapragmatic notion of *parrhesia* (adapted from ancient Greek (Foucault 2001)). As I argue, this notion signals additional layers of meaning associated with the use of directness.

Since the pole of indirection has been most extensively studied within an ethnographic perspective (Hendry and Watson 2001), and since it can be more readily encompassed within the Brown and Levinson model, I first consider the meanings and uses of doing *musayra* as an Arabic way of speaking. I then move on to a consideration of the cultural meanings and social uses of *dugri* speech, and then extend the analysis, viewing directness as a form of fearless speech.

## 2.1 *Indirectness as Doing Musayra*

The metapragmatic term *musayra* labels an interactional style that foregrounds the social-relational function of speech, often at the expense of transparency of intentions, simplicity of expression, and direct accessibility. Doing *musayra* in social exchanges involves the use of a range of politeness strategies which are oriented to upholding the face wants of one’s interlocutors in social exchanges. This social-relational focus is grounded in a cultural ethos in which social harmony is highly valorized.

Doing *musayra* thus involves displays of respect and a conciliatory attitude, and includes anticipating and accommodating one’s interlocutor’s face wants as well as accompanying the performance of FTAs—when these cannot be avoided—with redressive action in the form of accentuated hedging and deliberate ambiguities expressed through elaborate and esthetically rich forms of indirection. As a socially binding interactional ethos, *musayra* is geared both towards the hearer’s positive face wants—seeking to cultivate a shared sense of solidarity—and towards his or her negative face wants—avoiding imposition and protecting autonomy.

As the ethnography of *musayra* has suggested, this ethos is not only pervasive but also highly naturalized within the Arab-Palestinian community studied in Israel. As one informant put it, it is “in the blood of every Arab person.” It is something,

others said, that “you drink with your mother’s milk,” something that is “in the air, you breathe it in” (Griefat and Katriel 1989). Indeed, the metapragmatic notion of *musayra* carries potent overtones for speakers of Arabic, as do its derivatives such as the term *musayir*, which is a positive designator for a person disposed to doing *musayra*. As a mechanism of mutuality, however, it is socially regulated in terms of hierarchical norms pertaining to speaker role and status, as determined by gender, age, and social position. Indeed, while both men and women, adults and children, are bound by the ethos of *musayra*, its differential enactments are regulated in terms of gender and age and social class categories, with *musayra* extended from the one lower to the one higher in the social hierarchy.

Verbal acts of *musayra*, as culturally recognized expressions of considerateness and respect move between conversational restraint on the one hand and conversational effusiveness on the other. Conversational restraint is performatively enacted by strictly following procedural rules of deference, such as avoiding topics of potential discord or any form of confrontational talk. It is also associated with the regulation of pitch and the protection of speakers’ right to the floor. Loudness is shunned and so are hurried pace and interruptions. Conversational effusiveness involves politeness strategies that work to dramatize and intensify interpersonal bonding. These include accentuated displays of attentiveness, multilayered verbal greetings, the use of multiple deferential or affectionate forms of address, and generous sharing of personal resources. Informants associated *musayra* with “excess politeness” in language use, a norm that mandates going beyond standard interactional forms of politeness on particular occasions. For example, while addressing one’s uncle as “my uncle” would be a properly respectful form of address, calling him “my father” would signal an intention to highlight a special bond, enacting a sense of accentuated respect in the spirit of *musayra*.

The socially contextual nature of *musayra* is further brought out by the different types of *musayra* delineated by native informants. First of all, there is the *musayra* of *respect* that is regulated in terms of social-structural categories—the child is expected to do *musayra* to the adult, the woman to the man, the young to the old, the simple villager to the village head, and so on. Reciprocal displays of facework signal social equality, or at least the absence of claims to social status differentiation among interlocutors. Complementing it is the *musayra* of *magnanimity*, which involves acts of considerateness extended by the “haves” to the “have-nots”—by individuals socially or situationally placed in power positions towards those lower in status or experiencing specific circumstances of disempowerment. Examples given for this brand of *musayra* included accommodating to a sick child, humoring one’s wife when she is pregnant, showing hospitality to a stranger in one’s community, and so on. Then there is the *musayra* of *conciliation*, which is associated with potentially disruptive and conflictual interpersonal contexts, and involves politeness strategies designed to prevent open, angry, or even violent disputes. Mutually addressed conciliatory gestures of appeasement, sometimes orchestrated by a respected mediator who is *musayir* in the eyes of all, help to prevent conflicts from escalating further.

Finally, informants identified an interest-driven, *political musayra*, which involves the strategic manipulation of the *musayra* code itself for personal gain. Thus,

a man recounted his accentuated displays of *musayra* towards a woman in whom he had no interest except that she had a son who seemed like a good match for his daughter. Similarly, stories circulated in a village about an incumbent for office who, before the elections, took special care to cater to his neighbors' needs, doing *musayra* to them by offering rides in his car from the bus stop that was on the main road to the villagers' homes, a service that was terminated a day after elections were over.

In ways that echo Brown and Levinson's discussion of the use of the bald-on-record strategy in contexts marked by a requirement for efficiency or a sense of urgency, the usually binding facework demands associated with *musayra* must sometimes be suspended and directness is preferred. This is the case on weighty social occasions in which serious decisions need to be made, such as those involved in arranging a marriage. In such contexts, responsible counsel, factual information, and transparency are sought, and the indirection and circumlocution associated with the prevailing ethos of *musayra* are felt to be potentially disruptive. A person seeking advice may explicitly request for *musayra* to be temporarily withheld—urging one's interlocutor to stick to the facts, to be explicit and truthful, i.e., to speak “the *dugri*.” A similar dynamic was identified in Albert's (1972) study of speech patterning in Burundi. There, too, indirectness—metapragmatically labeled as *ubgenge* in Rundi speech—is the culturally valorized speech mode, but directness is also an available communicative resource to be invoked in contexts of serious and consequential deliberations.

Since it is associated with traditional ways, doing *musayra* implies the recognition of social arrangements and hierarchical relations that are sanctioned by the authority of tradition. As in the case of the Malagasy community studied by Ochs Keenan (1989) or the Kewa people of Highland New Guinea (Josephides 2001), who associated their own style of indirection with tradition, and linked direct talk to modernity, modernization is claimed to counteract the cultural force of *musayra*. Some younger informants testified to the increasing difficulty they experienced in conforming to the other-oriented, concessive, and self-effacing behavior involved in doing *musayra*, ambivalently pointing to the cultural option presented by the *dugri* ethos that they well knew is rooted in the Jewish-Israeli modernist, nation-building project.

## 2.2 Directness as *Dugri* Speech

In its use as a modern Hebrew vernacular form borrowed from vernacular Arabic, into which it was borrowed from Turkish *dogru*, *dugri* has acquired the role of a metapragmatic term specifically used to designate straight talk, straight talkers, and speech occasions characterized by both. As a cultural way of speaking, Israeli *dugri* speech was crystallized in the 1930s and 1940s among the first generation of Israeli-born Jews of European descent, the Sabras. In Zionist revolutionary ideology, the Sabra identity as a New Jew was constructed out of a rejection of Diaspora Jewish logocentricity, self-effacing and appeasing attitudes and cultural preference

for indirectness and verbal virtuosity. This fundamental rejection, grounded in a revolutionary, action-centered ethos, gave rise to Sabra culture.

While doing *musayra* applies to both verbal and material action, the *dugri* ethos is anchored in a localized cultural distinction between words and deeds. Indeed, within the modernist Zionist ethos, speech was valorized in terms of its instrumental effectiveness rather than its aesthetic possibilities or potential for subtle and complex expressivity. *Dugri* speech—with its accent on simplicity, factuality, and functional transparency—has become a hallmark of Sabra speech culture. Given the foregoing discussion of the bald-on-record strategy as conceptualized within a facework model of social interaction, the emergence of straight talk as a culturally dominant speech style raises interesting questions concerning the cultural warrant that underpins the privileged use of directness in speech. This becomes especially the case when directness in the form of *dugri* utterances allows speakers to perform FTAs without redress, avoiding the use of politeness strategies, and thereby conveying disregard for interlocutors' face wants. If, as Goffman has proposed, mutual concern for face is the ground rule of all interaction, one might well ask under what conditions can such patterned disregard for face in the service of simplicity, factuality, and functional transparency become a valorized cultural pattern?

I respond to this question in two steps: Firstly, and still working within the Brown and Levinson model, I briefly recapture some of my earlier ethnographic account of *dugri* speech (Katriel 1986), with an eye to articulating cultural members' warrants for privileging directness. The culturally embedded cluster of meanings and values informants associated with the *dugri* speech style provides an alternative interpretive frame through which *dugri* utterances are heard as inoffensive, even well intentioned, rather than as posing a threat to the interlocutors' face. Secondly, and stepping out of the facework model proposed by Brown and Levinson, I problematize the socio-pragmatic role of the social category of power embedded in it and explore the implications of recognizing the performative role of directness within the framework proposed by Foucault (2001) for the study of fearless speech.

The employment of *dugri* speech is warranted for Sabra speakers not by the value of efficiency, or a sense of urgency, but by a cluster of sociohistorically situated meanings that are routinely associated with it by its users. These include *assertiveness*, which involves the manifestation of inner strength and a fearless stance; *sincerity*, which relates to the expectation that one's utterances should transparently and unequivocally reflect one's communicative intentions; *naturalness*, which entails a preference for spontaneity and simplicity in message design; and *solidarity*, a social state characterized by the equalizing we-feeling that anthropologist Turner (1969) has termed "communitas."

By invoking these cultural meanings through the use of *dugri* speech, *dugri* speakers speak in ways that fully conform to Grice's conversational maxims, overriding the demands of facework. In so doing, they reaffirm their identities as proper Sabras, the proverbial New Jews who say what they mean and mean what they say. When speakers explicitly mark their verbal performance as *dugri* by prefacing their utterances with such metapragmatic locutions as "I'll tell you/let me ask you *dugri* . . .," they indicate their awareness of the potential threat to face posed by their straight talk as well as their choice to ignore it.

Self-declared *dugri* utterances are thus explicitly marked by a contentious flavor—they do not just transparently convey what the speakers believe to be true but also their estimation that their interlocutors would prefer not to hear this bit of truth. That is, *dugri* speakers see their talk as oppositional and assume an agonistic positioning vis-à-vis their interlocutors. This is not simply circumstantial disregard for face concerns. Rather, *dugri* speakers heighten attention to face by deliberately violating their interlocutors' face wants—signaling both disagreement and lack of solidarity at one level, yet invoking a shared cultural-communal frame on another. The use of *dugri* utterances positions speakers in a particular cultural matrix that affirms the possibility of a stance one can gloss as “dialogic opposition.”

This brings me to the second step in my attempt to extend the analysis of *dugri* speech, and this step takes us out of the facework model by focusing on the symbolically potent, performative dimension of *dugri* speech. Indeed, recognizing the performative role of *dugri* utterances entails different assumptions about the relationship between speech signs and their context of use than assumptions posited within the framework of the Brown and Levinson model. The logic of this model is essentially inferential and correlational, linking speech signs (in this case, forms associated with politeness strategies) with features of the sociocultural context (in this case, interpersonal distance, power relations, and cultural assumptions about the severity of particular FTAs). Thus, particular signs are read as indexing contextual features, and particular contextual configurations are read as motivating the use of strategically employed speech signs.

In the terms proposed by linguistic anthropologist Silverstein (1976), this model considers politeness strategies as contextually embedded presupposing indexes. Linguistic signs reflect a particular social terrain and are interpreted as a product of particular social forces. In the case of social relations marked by equality, the use of *dugri* speech reflects interpersonal trust. It is the expected mode in intimate relations. Explicit *dugri* utterances (as in the use of the framing device “I’ll tell you *dugri*...”) are used when interlocutors’ interpersonal distance permits—but cannot presume—the appropriateness of using straight talk. In such instances, the use of the metapragmatic term *dugri* serves to define the social field as appropriately involving trust and mutual regard and thereby authorizing the directness of the talk. Such explicit references bring out the performative role of *dugri* speech, and the metapragmatic term *dugri* functions as a creative rather than a presupposing index—it discursively defines the social situation rather than reflects its pre-given contextual features. As Silverstein explains, such verbal indexes become particularly important when “the occurrence of a speech signal is the only overt sign of the contextual parameter, verifiable, perhaps, by other co-occurring behaviors in other media, but nevertheless the most salient index of the specific value” (Silverstein 1976, p. 34).

The creative role of such indexical expressions brings out the performative, world-making function of *dugri* utterances. It becomes most apparent in relation to the power dimension in social exchanges. Unlike the social dimension of interpersonal distance, the power dimension can be asymmetrical. In the case of hierarchical power relations, *dugri* utterances are unidirectional. Inverting the social hierarchy, they are directed to the more powerful by those in lesser power positions—the

rank-and-file soldier to the commander, the office worker to the boss, and so on. *Dugri* speakers are aware of the power hierarchy, yet work to temporarily suspend it through the performance of bottom-up acts of verbal dissent couched in an appeal to a common cultural framework of solidarity and trust that is equally relevant to all.

This performative matrix finds its quintessential place in speech events (Hymes 1972) that are metapragmatically designated in vernacular Hebrew as “a *dugri* talk” (*siha dugrit*). Speech exchanges considered *dugri*—whether a priori or a posteriori—can be described as culturally patterned, ritualized verbal performance involving a distinctive sequential structure of verbal actions and particular interactional stances assumed by participants (Katriel 1986, pp. 57–75). As interactional rituals, *dugri* talks do not only give voice to speakers’ positions in a transparent way but also create a context in which the Sabra image as active, resourceful, and assertive—as willing to speak truth to power—is affirmed.

Thus, while the ethos of *musayra* is grounded in cultural values that privilege the interests of the group over those of the individual, the maintenance of social-structural hierarchy over the cultivation of interaction-based solidarity, and the preservation of harmony over the transformative potential of conflict, the *dugri* ethos, by contrast, is grounded in a cultural matrix that warrants the discursive undermining of these values in particular contexts. In speaking *dugri*, members of Israeli Sabra culture affirm the transformative potential of conflict talk even while conceding its detrimental effect on immediate interpersonal relations. They see themselves as promoting social harmony by asserting their individuality within a solidarity-oriented communal dialogue based on mutual trust. *Dugri* speakers’ ability and willingness to perform FTAs in giving voice to unpopular truths stand out most clearly in contexts of asymmetrical power relations, when conveying unwelcome opinions, attitudes, or information threatens to challenge the authority of one’s superiors or the taken-for-grantedness of received opinion. It is this challenge that makes *dugri* speech symbolically potent and endows it with a transformative potential.

As will be expounded in the next section, the directness articulated as *dugri* speech in Israeli Sabra culture in the context of asymmetrical power relations shares many socio-pragmatic features in common with the speech activity rendered by Michel Foucault as “fearless speech” in his discussion of the ancient Greek metapragmatic term *parrhesia* (Foucault 2001). In both cases, truth-telling is viewed as a speech activity whose meanings hinge on the social conditions of its performance. In both cases, too, truth-telling does not stand as a goal in itself but capitalizes on its transformative potential.

As public performances, both *dugri* speech and Greek *parrhesia* are enacted in confrontational rituals involving rhetorics of protest. As forms of *speaking out*, they address both concrete and generalized audiences, signaling actors’ insistence on *voicing* their thoughts and feelings despite their subordinate or marginalized social positioning. In contexts of actual or potential silencing, both *dugri* speech and *parrhesia* are culturally coded ways of speaking that give voice to the possibility of asserting difference and expressing dissent. A closer look at Foucault’s (2001) discussion of *parrhesia* can bring out its affinity with *dugri* speech, suggesting that both these vernacular ways of speaking provide cultural underpinnings for the Western critical tradition of open discussion and free expression.



### 3 Parrhesia: Speaking Truth to Power

In a series of seminars presented in 1983 at Berkeley, Foucault (2001) applied his genealogical approach to the study of the ancient Greek (and Roman) metapragmatic term *parrhesia*, rendered as “fearless speech.” Having identified the notion of *parrhesia* as a key symbol (Ortner 1973) in antiquity, he combed the classical Graeco-Roman literature for the uses of the term *parrhesia* and its derivatives, much in the way an ethnographer of speaking follows the social life of metapragmatic terms that name ways of speaking, speaker roles, speech practices, and occasions in the speech community he or she studies.

Foucault locates his interest in the term *parrhesia* within Western philosophy’s concern with the problematic of truth. One aspect of this problematic relates to the great tradition in Western thought that he calls “the analytics of truth” (Foucault 2001, p. 170). Such a philosophy relates to the ways in which the correctness of the process of reasoning that leads to determine the truth of a statement, i.e., the ability to gain access to the truth, is ascertained. Foucault’s own interest lies with another aspect of truth-telling—the problem of the truth-teller as a social role or of truth-telling as a social activity.

In the manner of the ethnographer who explores the speech economy of a particular cultural group, Foucault seeks to analyze “how the truth-teller role was variously problematized in Greek philosophy” (Foucault 2001, p. 169). The questions he asks address the socio-pragmatics of truth-telling as a speech activity that became thematized and theorized in terms of the notion of *parrhesia* around Socrates and his confrontation with the Sophists about politics, rhetoric, and ethics. These questions relate to four sociocultural dimensions of the activity of truth-telling—“who is able to tell the truth, about what, with what consequences, and with what relation to power” (Foucault 2001, p. 170). Tracing the language game of *parrhesia* in terms of these socio-pragmatic questions, Foucault sought to construct “a genealogy of the critical attitude in Western philosophy” (Foucault 2001, pp. 170–171).

As in the directness associated with *dugri* speech, the person who employs *parrhesia*, the *parrhesiastes*, is someone who chooses to speak out, rejecting the option (and, often, pressure) to keep silent. *Parrhesia* is grounded in a speech culture that privileges both transparency and personal avowal. Thus, “the *parrhesiastes* acts on other people’s minds by showing them as directly as possible what he actually believes” (Foucault 2001, p. 12), and he or she makes it clear that the opinion expressed is indeed his or her *own*—“I am the one who thinks this” (Foucault 2001). Since the *parrhesiastes*, like the *dugri* speaker, is aware that the true beliefs he or she is stating dissent from those of the audience, their voicing inevitably constitutes an FTA, an act of criticism that risks violating the interlocutor’s face wants. This, as Foucault points out, has particular consequences in contexts of power relations—“when a philosopher criticizes a tyrant, when a citizen criticizes the majority, when a pupil criticizes his teacher, then such speakers may be using *parrhesia*” (Foucault 2001, p. 18). This, however, is only the case when “the *parrhesia* comes from below and is directed towards ‘above’” (ibid.) and not, for example, when a parent or teacher criticizes a child. In ways that bring to mind the foregoing discussion of the directness of *dugri* speech, and of the uses of the bald-on-record strategy more

generally, Foucault claims that acts of *parrhesia* require courage and risk punishment. In Foucault's words:

When, for example, you see a friend doing something wrong and you risk incurring his anger by telling him he is wrong, you are acting as a *parrhesiastes*. In such a case you do not risk your life, but you may hurt him by your remarks, and your friendship may consequently suffer for it. If, in a political debate, an orator risks losing his popularity because his opinions are contrary to the majority's opinion, or his opinions may usher in a political scandal, he uses *parrhesia*. (Foucault 2001, p. 16)

Speakers' motives for the use of *parrhesia* combine a sense of freedom and a sense of duty. The *parrhesiastes* is actually free to keep silent, but he or she opts to speak out and does so out of a sense of duty. Thus, a criminal's confession can be considered *parrhesia* only when it is voluntary and not when it is mandated by the court. Criticism—whether it is directed towards a friend or a sovereign—is also enacted out of a sense of duty “insofar as it is a duty to help a friend who does not recognize his wrongdoing, or insofar as it is a duty towards the city to help the king to better himself as a sovereign” (Foucault 2001, p. 19).

In sum, Foucault characterizes *parrhesia* as a speech activity marked for its directness in socio-pragmatic terms—in terms of the speaker's positioning vis-à-vis the *truth*, in terms of the speaker's relation to his or her own *self*, in terms of the speaker's relation to the *audience*, and with reference to the *cultural codes* that govern this speech activity. In his words:

More precisely, *parrhesia* is a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relation to truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself). In *parrhesia* the speaker uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy. (Foucault 2001, pp. 19–20)

Foucault's account of *parrhesia* thus resonates quite closely with the foregoing account of *dugri* speech. Both these ways of speaking give voice to a cultural ethos that favors directness as a strategy in both symmetrical and bottom-up communication. Both involve a morally driven choice to give voice to one's truth despite the potential threat to interlocutors' face wants—risk disapproval, censure (and, in extreme cases, risk to life). A cultural ethos that favors directness legitimates the performance of fearless speech and may facilitate the emergence of organized dissent. In the next section, I illustrate such a cultural possibility with reference to several expressions of dissent involving three generations of Israeli soldiers, tracing their cultural roots to the ethos of directness in Israeli speech culture, articulated as *dugri* speech.

#### 4 Directness and the Rhetoric of Protest

As studies of the rhetoric of protest in social movements have shown (Morris III and Brown 2006; Bowers et al. 2010), directness as a speech ideology (Schieffelin et al. 1998) holds a privileged place in the rhetoric of dissent. It can be thought of as

the verbal counterpart of “direct action” practices developed within the context of social movements. Speaking out—as indicated by the explorations of *parrhesia* and *dugri* speech—is a well-recognized oppositional strategy. The counterhegemonic messages voiced in contexts of public dissent signal rejection of codes of respect that uphold powerful positions and hegemonic stances. They are deliberately provocative, serving the persuasive role of sociopolitical agitation.

My study of *dugri* speech (Katriel 1986) explored two cases of soldierly dissent in tracing the connection between directness of speech and the rhetoric of protest. Both involved incidents in which soldiers’ dissenting voices were interpreted as public enactments of *dugri* speech, and both have triggered public controversies that were magnified by short-lived, yet rather intense media coverage. In other words, these incidents of *dugri* speech gave rise to “social dramas,” i.e., public events involving discord that “bring fundamental aspects of society, normally overlaid by the customs and habits of daily intercourse, into frightening prominence” (Turner 1974, p. 36). In such conflict situations, people find themselves taking sides “in terms of deeply entrenched moral imperatives and constraints” (Turner 1974, p. 36), considering it their duty to directly challenge fundamental societal values by engaging in fearless speech.

One such social drama, which I addressed in my original *dugri* study, involved the case of Colonel Eli Geva, who declared his refusal to lead his troops into the heart of Beirut during the first Lebanon War (1982), claiming that such a move was morally indefensible because it would cause the indiscriminate loss of civilian lives. Eli Geva thus employed *dugri* speech to give voice to the truth of his personal conscience and thereby challenged not only the military hierarchy but also central cultural values—such as self-security concerns and martial camaraderie—that ground the military order of which he was a part (Katriel 1986, pp. 89–98). His act of defiance cost him his military career.

The other social drama I interpreted in terms of the *dugri* idiom involved the publication of Netiva Ben-Yehuda’s autobiographical novel *1948—Between Calendars* in 1981, which focused on her experiences as a woman fighter in the Israeli War of Independence (1948). This novel was marketed as a *dugri* book that presented the reality of war without obfuscations and equivocation. It thematized the act of speaking out, as the author retrospectively invoked the self-doubts that beleaguered her as a soldier and led her to question the validity of Israeli war culture. In a striking section of the book, she described the self-silencing strategies she employed as a committed young soldier in response to the social and familial pressure she felt not to reveal her feelings and doubts, and suggested that the publication of the book served as a belated corrective for that silencing. The book directly challenged the fundamental values associated with the emergence of the *dugri* ethos—such as courage and purposeful action, and demanded a place for indecisiveness, self-doubt, and moral sensitivity when facing combat situations of the kind the author described.

In choosing to speak out, both Eli Geva and Netiva Ben-Yehuda used straight talk to challenge fundamental components of Israeli cultural ethos—he in real time, she in retrospect. Some of the audiences they addressed found their challenges not only provocative but also morally offensive. Two generations down the road,

a group of Israeli veterans organized under the heading of Breaking the Silence (BTS) protested the nature of their military engagements vis-à-vis the civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territories. These activists similarly employed the cultural idiom of straight talk in publicizing their own and their peers' experiences as soldiers of the occupation in the form of a well-designed testimonial project of political dissent.

BTS activists are all young veterans of the Israeli army who spent at least part of their 3-year mandatory military service in the Israeli occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza during the first decade of the twenty-first century, which included the Palestinian uprising, the Al-Aqsa intifada, between 2000 and 2004 and its aftermath. The core members of BTS formulate their choice to speak out in moral terms. As discussed in Foucault's study of *parrhesia*, they see their choice as a blend between the freedom to speak out and the sense of duty that propels them to do so. At the same time, they are aware of the personal costs involved in their choice as many of them have faced social censure, criminalization, marginalization, and denigration by official state organs as well as members of their informal social networks.

As a grassroots, activist-led organization, BTS engages in generating bottom-up messages addressed to the soldiers' superiors, their elders, political leaders, and the public at large. Their mission statements appeal to the society that has sent them out to perform the daily tasks involved in upholding the occupation of millions of civilians, explaining:

The main goal of BTS is to expose the true reality in the territories and as a consequence to promote a public debate on the moral price paid by Israeli society as a whole due to the reality in which young soldiers are facing a civilian population everyday and controlling it. (BTS 2004)

Their marginalization is a product of their dissent, not its cause. Indeed, within the matrix of Israeli society, they carry prestige as (largely) male combatants who have demonstrated their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the nation, and within the context of protest, they carry a great deal of narrative authority as authentic witnesses of the occupation scene. Having placed themselves in a counterhegemonic yet privileged position, they claim the right to voice their outspoken critique of the Israeli occupation regime and the military culture that perpetuates it. Provocatively, they present their dissent and straight talk as an expression of their patriotic commitment and as an extension of their military role, saying:

So far, hundreds of veterans have decided to break the silence, and each day they are followed by many more. During our service we successfully fulfilled a wide range of military tasks. There is one task left: to tell, to speak, and to hide nothing. (BTS 2004)

These soldiers' version of fearless speech takes the form of a grand gesture of condemnation—political condemnation of military practices, moral condemnation of the occupation regime and the social silence surrounding it, and self-condemnation for their own complicity in upholding this regime. The moral outrage encapsulated in this condemnatory stance sets the distinctive tonalities of BTS testimonial rhetoric. Thus, while the soldiers' testimonies offer detailed descriptions of the scene of occupation in factual terms, the moral outrage they express foregrounds the epideictic dimension of their rhetoric. This rhetoric of condemnation is their discursive response to the extremities of helplessness and degradation in which they

find themselves implicated during their military rounds and the moral shocks these engender (Jasper 1997).

For the past 10 years, steadfast in their resolve to give voice to the truth of their experience as well as to their moral convictions, these troubled yet eloquent young men and women have been trying to reclaim their humanity by generating cycles of testimony-based protests that involve self-reflective, sometimes self-incriminating, accounts of their experiences as soldiers of the occupation. Their rhetorical project, couched in the language of testimony and witnessing, discursively addresses and critiques the ills of the occupation by joining a long-standing speech ideology that valorizes morally driven fearless speech, a cultural strand that draws on the Western critical tradition rooted in *parrhesia*, and whose localized version is encapsulated in the *dugri* code.

Voices of protest—even while expressing personal grievances or giving voice to personal experience—have a public resonance as they seek to affect social agendas and trigger public debate. Their employment of directness is a deliberate strategy designed to attain clarity of statement, as well as a provocation designed to attain audience attention. Expressing counterhegemonic positions through public performances of fearless speech signals disengagement from centers of power and social prestige, yet, at the same time, it constitutes an attempt to tip the balance of power through a transformative act of speech.

## 5 Concluding Remarks

In revisiting the directness dimension of speech, I have foregrounded the social and cultural contexts in which both indirect and direct utterances are used. While indirectness in speech has been more extensively studied within socio-pragmatics and linguistic anthropology, it is the study of directness that seems to invite an extension of current approaches to exploring this speech dimension in both interactional and political terms.

I followed in the footsteps of the Brown and Levinson model of politeness, which has incorporated the Gricean approach to the interpretability of utterances, adding a concern with the ritual dimension of social interaction as a form of facework. Within such an expanded approach, pragmatists' interest in utterance meanings and mutual understanding in communication is complemented by—and balanced against—the performative dimension of verbal utterances as ritualized gestures that articulate and recognize social identities and social relations and thereby help sustain the social order.

Brown and Levinson's model of politeness strategies is grounded in the analysis of potential clashes between the representational-interpretative functions of utterances and their relational-ritual functions. Direct talk—while enhancing clarity and transparency and thus facilitating hearers' understanding of utterances—may at the same time unsettle social relations by creating interpersonal offense. It therefore needs to be legitimated by appeal to either social circumstances or cultural values that can serve as warrants for straight talk. The brief discussion of ethnographic

studies concerned with directness and indirectness was designed to illustrate the centrality of cultural meanings and localized interpretations in understanding and weighing the use of direct and indirect forms in the verbal repertoires of particular speech communities. My ethnographic accounts of both indirectness and directness, as natively captured by the metapragmatic terms of *musayra* and *dugri*, respectively, are informed by the insights offered by the Brown and Levinson model and its attempt to bring into conversation the representational and the relational dimensions of language use.

The study of public dramas and social controversies triggered by the use of *dugri* speech, and ancient Greek *parrhesia*, has pointed to the role of directness in the rhetoric of social and political protest. While both *dugri* and *parrhesia* name cultural-linguistic possibilities that pertain to interpersonal everyday interactions as well, they seem to find their quintessential place as performative acts that challenge power relations and redefine social situations. These are typically contexts marked by bottom-up power struggles in which directness is a morally grounded vehicle for voicing sociopolitical dissent and unsettling dominant and hegemonic positions.

Moving from the interpersonal to the public domain, engaging in direct, fearless speech—insisting on frankness in telling the truth—becomes specified as a language-centered political act of protest, an act of speaking out. Such acts are characterized by (1) their oppositional nature, the voicing of counterhegemonic positions; (2) their bottom-up (or margin-center) structure of participation; and (3) their “double articulation” (Scannell 1991), i.e., the appeal to a generalized audience beyond the person(s) directly addressed. I would argue, therefore, that the distinctiveness of directness as political *parrhesia* in Foucault’s discussion, or as oppositional *dugri* rituals in my own studies, lies in the particular structure of participation involved no less than in utterance form and content.

This chapter has revisited directness as a dimension of speech by attempting to bring into conversation theoretical frameworks proposed for the study of a range of speech phenomena addressed in terms of this dimension, as well as interpretive findings regarding culturally named ways of speaking that are metapragmatically labeled and discursively evaluated by native speakers as either direct or indirect. Taking the ethnography of speaking approach as my point of departure, my discussion was not concerned with the representational function of utterance meanings or questions of truth and falsehood. Rather, it was concerned with truth-telling as a verbal activity, addressing the interpretability of utterances within a broader frame of discussion that balanced issues of meaning transparency against relational-performative concerns associated with facework and power relations.

The discussion of public *dugri* rituals and political *parrhesia* has added another layer of meaning to the study of direct talk, singling out particular contexts and participation structures as factors defining the nature and role of direct talk as a speech activity that finds its special place in the rhetoric of protest and facilitates the possibility of voicing dissent. This move has extended the discussion of directness from a concern with the interpretability of utterances and the ritual regulation of facework, opening the road to a discussion of the performative uses of the directness dimension and the politics of speech in social life.

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# The Pragmatics of Embedded Exclamatives

Javier Gutiérrez-Rexach and Patricia Andueza

**Abstract** In this chapter, taking into consideration the evidence from Spanish, the pragmatic and semantic content of exclamative expressions in embedded contexts is analyzed. It is argued that embedding is not a straightforward and transparent process. Rather, several very specific pragmatic conditions have to be satisfied. They mostly relate to grounding. Grounding is a contextually dependent process involving *de re* reference and proper anchoring of a fact. The proposition associated with this fact is the one that would trigger the relevant emotive attitude if such an exclamative was unembedded. The landscape of possible exclamative embedders is charted and it is shown that predicates in other classes, such as directive miratives, are also able to subordinate or embed exclamatives.

**Keywords** Exclamatives · Expressive · Embedded contexts

## 1 Introduction

Research on exclamatives and other expressive speech acts has mostly focused on their occurrence as independent expressions. There are several issues of interest from the pragmatic and semantic perspectives: What is an exclamatory speech act? How do these acts relate to others? How are they linguistically encoded? There has been less research on the occurrence of exclamatives as embedded expressions and the demarcation problems that this possibility brings to the fore: Are embedded exclamatives still exclamatives? What is gained or lost with embedding? Nevertheless, there is recent research on embedded or indirect exclamatives, which posits several interesting additional semantic and pragmatic questions that need to be resolved. The most significant one is to determine which predicates can embed exclamative constructions. A related question is to characterize the content of the resulting expression.

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There are two main theories about embedded exclamatives. Grimshaw (1979), Elliot (1974), Zanuttini and Portner (2003) and Gutiérrez-Rexach (2008) claim that only emotive predicates are able to embed exclamatives. For example, the embedded *wh*-expression *how much he drinks* behaves as an exclamative when embedded by an emotive verb, or as a question when embedded by a question-selecting verb such as *wonder*. It cannot be embedded by proposition-embedding verbs such as *believe*, as shown in (1):

- (1) a. It is unbelievable how much he drinks (embedded exclamative)  
 b. I wonder how much he drinks (embedded question)  
 c. \*I believe how much he drinks

On the other hand, Lahiri (1991, 2002), D’Avis (2002), and Abels (2004) claim that *wh*-clauses embedded by emotive predicates have to be treated as *wh*-interrogatives.

In this chapter, mostly considering evidence from Spanish, it will be claimed that exclamative sentences express exclamatory speech acts and involve grounded *de re* reference. They can be embedded by several classes of verbs, most prominently factive emotive predicates. The embedding process can take place only if certain semantic and pragmatic conditions are met. These conditions are also satisfied by other verb classes, such as certain directive predicates.

## 2 Exclamatory Speech Acts

Declarative sentences are claimed to denote truth values and express beliefs or assertions. Interrogative sentences denote questions—modeled for example as sets of proposition, as in Karttunen (1977)—and express requests; imperatives denote (and instruct) commands; and exclamatives denote exclamations and are used to express speaker-based attitudes, associated with “exclamation” in general.

When uttering an exclamative, a speaker expresses a contextually dependent emotive attitude toward the content of his utterance. By uttering (2), the speaker is expressing an emotive attitude (e.g., surprise) toward the fact that the gift is wonderful (to a point that exceeded his expectations):

- (2) What a wonderful present he gave me for my birthday!

In Gutiérrez-Rexach (1996), it is claimed that the logical form (LF) of exclamative expressions is characterized by having a force operator, *EXC*. Semantically, the exclamative operator *EXC* introduces an emotive property *P* which holds of (is true of) an agent *a* (the speaker) and the proposition *p* expressed by the exclamative expression at the utterance world *w*—cf. also Grosz (2011)—if the speaker holds such an emotive property toward *p* at *w*. Formally:

- (3)  $EXC(a)(w)(p)$  iff  $\exists P_{emot}[P(w)(a)(p)]$

Exclamatives constitute genuine speech acts and have illocutionary force. Thus, the speaker expresses an illocutionary attitude and makes certain commitments, generally encoded as presuppositions, when uttering an exclamative expression. Consider (4):

- (4) How tall John is!

A speaker would utter (4) felicitously in a situation *s* if and only if he has received new information or assessed all information leading him to a revision of his beliefs. It is the accommodation of this information in the common ground that would serve as the proper context for uttering (4). More specifically, a speaker may utter (4) when he realizes that John is tall to a degree that exceeds his expectations. For instance, in a situation where the speaker's expectation is that John is 5.7 ft. tall but he learns that in the world of evaluation, John is indeed 6.2 ft. tall, then he can felicitously utter (4) to express his surprise. We state that context cannot be understood here only as what is being updated and what is required to meet the constraints imposed by presuppositional expressions. Context plays an important role as well in the way the addressee is able to represent the information elicited in an exclamative. More precisely, if a context fails to satisfy the presuppositional requirements of an incoming sentence, the sentence is undefined relative to such context, and the update process cannot proceed. The relevant presuppositions have to be part of the information which an addressee uses to construct the intended interpretation of an incoming utterance. As Simons (2003) points out, accommodation must be constructed as a belief shift undertaken individually by each discourse participant, but with the same goal, namely that of bringing the actual common ground in line with the presuppositional requirements of utterances. According to Simons, accommodation is clearly a process undertaken by the discourse participants, and is indeed an integral part of the overall interpretation process. However, it cannot be driven by the common ground, as claimed by Stalnaker (1974). Accommodation is not driven by a hearer's recognition of the presuppositions of the speaker but by the requirements of interpretation. A cooperative speaker should utter a presupposing sentence only if she believes that her addressees have or can construct an information state that can be updated by the utterance.

The speaker is the only individual who is able to assess *de re* the propositional content associated with an exclamative, since exclamatives as speech acts denote an emotional attitude about an unexpected fact, which is based on the speaker's personal assessment. According to Searle's (1975) taxonomy of illocutionary acts, by uttering an expressive speech act, a speaker simply expresses the sincerity conditions of the illocutionary act.

The belief state associated with the utterance of an exclamative sentence is a very specific type of belief: grounded belief. For someone to believe that a fact is true, he needs to have a *de re* belief about it.<sup>1</sup> According to Kratzer (2002), a fact cannot simply be identified with a "true proposition," since a true proposition is not the same as a true fact. For instance, if Jones believes that the late prime minister's name began with a B, he believes what is true, since the late prime minister's last name was Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman. But if he believes that Mr. Balfour was the late prime minister, he will still believe that the late prime minister's last name began with a B. So, even though the proposition "the late prime minister's name began with a B" is true, the fact is false. Kratzer (2002) proposes that for someone

<sup>1</sup> The *de re/de dicto* distinction has traditionally been related to the semantics of opacity-inducing verbs. An expression is semantically *de re* if it allows substitution of codesignating terms *salva veritate*. If not, it is semantically *de dicto*. In Quine's (1956) example, the sentence *Ralph believes that someone is a spy* can be interpreted *de re* as "Ralph believes that Ortcutt is a spy" or *de dicto* as "Ralph believes that there are spies."

to believe that a fact is true, we need to have *de re* beliefs. According to her, in order for *de re* beliefs to be possible, some causal connection between believers and the *res* of their beliefs is required as well:

(5) *S* knows *p* if and only if *S* believes *p de re* of some fact exemplifying *p*.

Thus, according to this definition, the sentence above can only be true if Jones' belief is a *de re* belief about an actual fact exemplifying the proposition that the late prime minister's name began with a "B." In order for this *de re* belief to be possible, a causal connection between the believer and the *de re* element is required as well: *S* knows *p* if and only if *S* believes *p de re* of some fact exemplifying *p* (cf. Kratzer 2002/2012). Consider now (6):

(6) How tall John is!

In the case of exclamatives, a speaker utters an exclamative such as (6) in a situation *s* where she can verify that indeed John is tall to a degree that exceeds the speaker's expectations: For instance, in a situation where the speaker's expectation is that John is 5.2 ft., but realizes that in the world of evaluation, Juan is indeed 6 ft. tall. By uttering an exclamative such as (6), the speaker is uttering a true proposition. On the other hand, in a situation where John is as tall as expected, or in a situation where John is less tall than expected, uttering an exclamative as the one above will lead us to utter, in the former case, a false proposition, and in the latter an infelicitous exclamative. Furthermore, in a situation where the speaker ignores the actual height of John, uttering an exclamative would not be possible. In other words, the actual fact is the trigger of the exclamative, but the speaker needs to have some previous expectations about the descriptive content elicited in the exclamative as well as some evidence about the actual fact.

In sum, in a situation *s* where John is as tall as expected or less tall than expected, an exclamative such as (6) would express either: (i) a false misleading proposition, (ii) a rhetorical one<sup>2</sup>, or (iii) a potentially non-informative proposition. In scenarios (i) and (ii), the speaker knows the grounding fact, i.e., that John in fact is not that tall, so he could deliberately utter (6) to mislead the addressee or utter it rhetorically, with the goal of conveying ironically that he is short. In the case of (iii), if the speaker does not know the grounding fact, uttering an exclamatory expression would be unwarranted and inconsistent with the necessary conditions for such an utterance. If, for example, John is indeed short but the speaker believes him to be tall, the utterance would be uninformative, since it would be contributing false information, although not with a deliberate ulterior purpose. The speaker is expressing an emotive attitude toward a proposition which is actually not factual (not true in the world of utterance).

Interestingly, Sharvit and Stateva (2002) holds that the verb *surprise*, when embedding questions, does not support *de dicto* readings not only because it is a ve-

<sup>2</sup> According to Andueza and Gutiérrez-Rexach (2011), rhetorical exclamatives differ from standard exclamatives in the fact that the speaker assumes not the truth of the utterance but of its negation. When a speaker utters (6) rhetorically, she knows that John's height has not exceeded her assumptions but pretends as it has. Therefore, the implied meaning of (6) is "How no-tall John is!"

ridical predicate but also, and more importantly, because it has a weakly exhaustive semantics. Let us interpret the following utterance: *It surprised John which students left* in the following scenario. Student Mary and student Sally (the only students) left; John is surprised that Mary and Sally left, but he does not know that they are students. We understand that the *de re* reading of the utterance is true. But we cannot get a *de dicto* reading since the following example would sound awkward: *It did not REALLY surprise John which students left*. Indeed, he did not expect Mary and Sally—the students who left—to leave, but he was not aware that they were students.

In addition, no scenario can be constructed where the *de dicto* reading would be true and the *de re* reading false. In the following scenario, (7) is simply true.

(7) It surprised John which students left

(8) Scenario: Student Mary and student Sally left. Student Bill did not leave. John knows that Mary and Sally are students and he is surprised that they left. He is not surprised that Bill did not leave, because he did not expect him to leave.

We can reach the same conclusions about exclamatives. Consider the Spanish example in (9):

(9) ¡Las estudiantes que se han ido!  
“The students that have left!”

In a situation where Mary and Sally are the only students who left, the exclamative (9) cannot be uttered under the following conditions: (i) if the *de re* reading is true, but *de dicto* is false (for instance, if the speaker knows that Mary, John, Peter, Steve, and Sally left, but does not know that they are students); (ii) if the *de re* reading is false, but *de dicto* is true (in a situation where the speaker does not know that Mary and Sally left but is aware of the fact that they are students); (iii) if both *de re* and *de dicto* readings are both false (for instance, if it is the case that the speaker does not know that Mary and Sally left and she does not know that they are students either).

In sum, the felicitous conditions when uttering an exclamative are: (i) to have a grounded belief about the fact at issue, and (ii) to have evidence that this fact is indeed unexpected with respect to one’s assumptions. As was discussed above, if the belief is not properly grounded, the resulting utterance leads to a false, misleading, or non-informative utterance.

### 3 The Denotation of Exclamatives

#### 3.1 *Factivity*

Exclamatives have been claimed to be factive constructions.<sup>3</sup> Kiparsky and Kiparsky (1970) characterize factivity as follows: “[a factive operator] presupposes that the

<sup>3</sup> Kiparsky and Kiparsky (1970) distinguish between factive and nonfactive predicates. Factive predicates include *significant, odd, tragic, exciting, relevant, matter, count, make sense, suffice, amuse, bother ... regret, be aware (of), grasp, comprehend, take into consideration, take into*

embedded clause expresses a true proposition, and makes some assertion about the proposition.” Elliot (1974) and Grimshaw (1979) isolate a class of predicates selecting exclamatives: emotives. These predicates express a subjective assessment about a proposition rather than mere knowledge about it or its truth value. Factive emotive predicates are emotive predicates presupposing the truth of their complements: *It is important, crazy, odd, relevant, regret, resent*, etc. There is wide agreement on the fact that exclamatives are factive (Elliot 1974; Grimshaw 1979; Zanuttini and Portner 2003; Gutiérrez-Rexach 1996). When uttering (10), the speaker presupposes that the relevant group has been assigned a (long) book:

(10) What a long book we have been assigned!

Proposition-selecting factive emotive predicates presuppose their complement. For instance, (11a) and (11b) entail sentence (11c):

- (11) a. It is odd that it is raining  
 b. It is not odd that it is raining  
 c. It is raining

Other expressions are nonfactive emotive predicates: *fear, desire, want, it is vital*, etc. (Mindt 2011). These cannot embed exclamatives. For example, *I fear that he was/will be angry* does not presuppose *he was/will be angry*.

### 3.2 Degree Reading

Reference to degrees has been recently claimed to be essential to determine the content of an exclamative (Castroviejo 2006, 2008; Rett 2011). There are two degrees involved: (i) a reference degree obtained by applying a gradable property to an individual; and (ii) a standard degree taken from context. There is a scalar implicature associated with the exclamative sentence (Gutiérrez-Rexach 2001; Zanuttini and Portner 2000, 2003; Villalba 2003). The implicature marks a high point in a contextually determined scale, triggering the high-degree reading that is so characteristic of sentences of this type:

(12) What a smart politician he is!

In (12), the standard level of intelligence (standard degree) is established by the speaker’s expectations and the relevant politician’s intelligence (reference degree) is located in a point higher than the standard one in the relevant scale of intelligence.

These exclamatives in Spanish are introduced by certain *wh*-words, such as *qué* (“what”), *cuánto* (“how many/much”), *cómo* (“how”) but not by *wh*-words such as *por qué* (“why”), *para qué* (“what for”), *dónde* (“where”), or *cuándo* (“when”). The *wh*-phrase, which occurs in a displaced position in the left periphery of the sentence,

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*account, bear in mind, ignore, make clear, mind, forget (about), deplore, resent, care (about)*, etc. Nonfactive predicates include expressions such as *likely, sure, possible, true, false, seems, appear, happen, chance, turn out ... suppose, assert, allege, assume, claim, charge, maintain, believe, conclude, conjecture, intimate, deem, fancy, figure....*

can be headed by a noun phrase (13a), an adjectival phrase (13b), or an adverbial phrase (13c):

- (13) a. ¡Qué cosas dice Juan!  
 “The things that Juan says!”  
 b. ¡Qué divertido es Juan!  
 “How funny Juan is!”  
 c. ¡Qué bien habla Juan!  
 “What a good speaker Juan is!”

As was mentioned above, there are two degrees involved in *wh*-exclamatives: (i) a reference degree obtained by applying a gradable property (*G*) to an individual (*x*); and (ii) a standard degree taken from context. The scalar implicature associated with the exclamative sentence indicates a high point in a contextually determined scale, triggering the high-degree reading. Consider (14):

- (14) ¡Qué inteligente es Juan!  
 “How intelligent Juan is!”

In (14), the standard level of intelligence (standard degree) is established by the speaker’s assumptions/beliefs (Gutiérrez Rexach 1996), and Juan’s intelligence (reference degree) is located in a point higher than the standard one in the relevant height scale. The standard level of intelligence (standard degree) is established by the speaker’s expectations and Juan’s intelligence (reference degree) is located in a point higher than the standard one in the relevant scale of intelligence.

### 3.3 *The Denotation of Different Types of Exclamatives*

The literature on exclamatives has mostly focused on *wh*-exclamatives. Nevertheless, exclamatives are not uniform. There are several types of exclamatives in Spanish<sup>4</sup> with important differences in their syntactic and semantic characteristics.

#### 3.3.1 **Free-Relative Exclamatives**

Free-relative exclamatives or relatives introduced by definite determiners (Caponigro 2004) may have exclamatory force with a degree reading when occurring as root elements:

- (15) a. ¡Lo alto que es tu hermano!  
 “How tall your brother is!”  
 b. ¡Las cervezas que bebe!  
 “The number of beers he drinks!”

In the case of (15a), the adjective displaced to the left periphery of the sentence is in a focus position pied-piped by the neuter determiner. In the case illustrated by (15b), noun displacement is triggered by the definite determiner (Gutiérrez-Rexach 2001).

<sup>4</sup> See Alonso Cortés (1999) for a more detailed description.

### 3.3.2 Evidential Exclamatives

There are exclamatives introduced by evidential adjectives whose reading is clearly propositional. In (16a) and (16b), the relevant alternatives are not based on degrees or kinds, but on propositions (cf. Andueza and Gutiérrez-Rexach 2011):

- (16) a. ¡Claro que te lo voy a dar!  
 “Of course, I will give it to you!”  
 b. ¡Evidentemente que te voy a devolver el libro!  
 “Evidently, I will give the book back to you!”

When uttering exclamatives of this sort, a speaker asserts that it is evident that he is going to give the relevant object to the addressee, and he also expresses a contextually determined emotive attitude toward that assertion. For instance, (16b) can be uttered in a situation in which the addressee has expressed his doubts about getting a book back and, by uttering this exclamative, the speaker expresses his surprise or resentment toward the fact that the addressee does not trust him.

### 3.3.3 Declarative Sentences

Gutiérrez-Rexach (1996) claims that the following declarative sentences can be considered genuine exclamative expressions from a prosodic and illocutionary point of view:

- (17) a. ¡Juan se lo ha comido todo!  
 “Juan ate everything!”  
 b. ¡Juan es muy divertido!  
 “Juan is so funny!”

They exhibit the characteristic intonational contour of these types of sentences<sup>5</sup> and, by uttering them, a speaker expresses an emotive attitude toward the content of his utterance: In the case of (17a), the relevant attitude is directed toward the fact that Juan has eaten everything; (17b) is interpreted as “Juan is an instance of the kind of funny man I am referring to.”

Thus, the content of exclamatives is not only about degrees but also about propositions. We claim that these four structural types of exclamatives can be merged in two different semantic groups (Andueza 2011; Andueza and Gutiérrez-Rexach 2011): (1) exclamatives whose content is a degree property, such as *wh*-exclamatives or free-relative exclamatives; and (2) exclamatives whose content is propositional, such as exclamatives with a declarative structure and exclamatives introduced by an evidential expression.

Following Rett (2007, 2008), it can be assumed that these two groups of exclamatives have different requirements. The exclamatives in the first group are ex-

<sup>5</sup> Whereas root interrogatives exhibit an ascending intonational contour, root exclamatives can be uttered with an ascending, descending, or undulating contour, depending on the emotive attitude of the speaker (Navarro Tomás 1948).



pressively correct when their content is about a degree that exceeds the speaker's assumptions/beliefs. The content of the exclamatives in the second group must be about a fact that contradicts the speaker's assumptions/beliefs.

## 4 Embedding Exclamatives

Elliot (1974) and Grimshaw (1979) claim that complements of a particular semantic type are selected by predicates of the same type, a requirement that she dubs semantic selection or s-selection to contrast it with standard categorial or syntactic selection, also called subcategorization. This explains why exclamatives are embedded only by factive emotive predicates, and not by non-factive predicates such as *not know*, *fear*, *ask* or *wonder*, as the contrast between (18) and (19) illustrates.

- (18) a. It is amazing how tall John is  
 b. I am surprised at how fast John can run  
 (19) a. \*I don't know/fear what a fool he is  
 b. Fred is wondering/will ask how tall John is

The embedded complement in (18a) is a genuine exclamative in root contexts, when it occurs unembedded (*How tall John is!*). It is correctly identified as an exclamative and embedded by an emotive verb stating the relevant emotive attitude that the grounding fact actually triggers.<sup>6</sup> The embedded complement in (19a) is also a genuine exclamative, an expression which can only be interpreted as having exclamatory force (*What a fool he is!*), and not as any other type of *wh*-expression (interrogative). A non-factive predicate such as *fear* cannot embed (19a) because it conflicts with the factivity presupposition of the embedded exclamative. Finally, the propositional complement in sentence (19b) only has the non-exclamatory meaning.

Zanutini and Portner (2003) claim that exclamatives can be embedded by factive predicates because they contain a covert factive morpheme FACT hosted in the specifier of the complementizer phrase (CP). This factive morpheme generates a pragmatic effect of widening. They propose that exclamatives such as (20) have two domains of quantification, illustrated in (21):

- (20) What strange things Juan eats!  
 (21) D1 = {eats (he, poblanos), eats (he, serranos), eats (he, jalapeños)}  
 D2 = {eats (he, poblanos), eats (he, serranos), eats (he, jalapeños),  
 eats (he, gueros), eats (he, habaneros)}

The first domain (D1) in (21) would be the set of individuals denoted by the *wh*-clause in a standard situation (mild hot peppers); the second one (D2) would be a larger domain containing not only the expected individuals but also unusual ones

<sup>6</sup> A reviewer points out that sometimes nonemotive verbs may become emotive when uttered with an expressive intonation: *I DON'T KNOW what a fool he is!* Notice that in these cases, ironic readings tend to be favored. For example, the former sentence can be understood as "I do indeed know that he is a big fool and this fact amazes me."

(very hot peppers). The presence of a factive operator makes the nonstandard alternatives in the quantificational domain presupposed. In sum, the analysis proposed by Elliot (1974), Grimshaw (1979), and Zanuttini and Portner (2003) agrees in considering factivity a property of both the predicate and the exclamative clauses.

Gutiérrez-Rexach (1996, 2008) claims that factivity is one of the ingredients of the intensional exclamative operator on propositions (EXC). Additionally, a contextually dependent emotive property is predicated of the relevant presupposed proposition. Emotive factives embed exclamatives because they encode the exclamative operator. Root exclamatives can be considered factive because of the presence of a null emotive predicate, associated with the presence of the exclamative operator at the sentential level in an LF representation, as assumed in generative approaches to natural language syntax. Cf. Grosz (2011) for a variant of this theory.

Lahiri (1991, 2002) points out that *wh*-clauses embedded under predicates of surprise are not obligatorily interpreted as exclamatives. However, he only mentions those *wh*-clauses that cannot be matrix exclamatives, such as (22):

(22) It is surprising who came to the party

D'Avis (2002) and Abels (2004, 2005) claim that the exclamative reading is the result of embedding a *wh*-interrogative clause under an exclamative/surprise predicate. Different predicates relate to different aspects of the *wh*-complement. Consider (23):

(23) Jill is amazed at how tall John is.

The denotation of this sentence involves two answers (*answer1* and *answer2*), based on Heim (1994): (i) *answer1* is the set of worlds making the sentence *John is d-tall true*; and (ii) *answer2* is the set of worlds where the proposition corresponding to *answer1* relative to the *wh*-clause is the same as in the actual world. In (23), Jill knows *answer2* (*John is d-tall*) and she expected not-*answer1* (*John is d-tall*).

Let us summarize the predictions of the different theories on the embedding issue. For Lahiri (1991, 2002), D'Avis (2002), and Abels (2004), embedding is possible as long as the *wh*-complement has *answer1* and *answer2* and the matrix predicate relates them. For Zanuttini and Portner (2003), embedding is possible as long as widening is possible. Grimshaw (1979) and Elliot (1974) claim that embedding is possible as long as s-selection requirements are satisfied (the complement denotes/presupposes a fact).

## 5 *De re* Ascription and Spanish Exclamatives

A problem for contemporary theories of embedding is that predicates do not seem to embed exclamatives uniformly. In other words, not all emotives embed (Elliot (1974), Grimshaw (1979), and Zanuttini and Portner (2003)), and, furthermore, it is not only emotive predicates that are able to embed exclamative expressions.

### 5.1 Embedding *Wh*-Exclamatives

Andueza and Gutiérrez-Rexach (2012)<sup>7</sup>, analyzing Spanish exclamative constructions, report that there are significant embedding asymmetries with *wh*-complements in Spanish, as illustrated in the following examples. Their study showed that the most accepted exclamatives were the free relative exclamatives (72%), followed by the *wh*-exclamatives: *cuánto/a/os/as* “how many”(14%), *qué* “what” (7%), and *cómo* “how” (7%) (Fig. 30.1).

Embedded complements of factive emotives are normally degree relatives, instantiating the structure “*lo*+ADJ+sentential expression,” such as the one in (24a), with embedded counterparts as the ones in (24b, c):

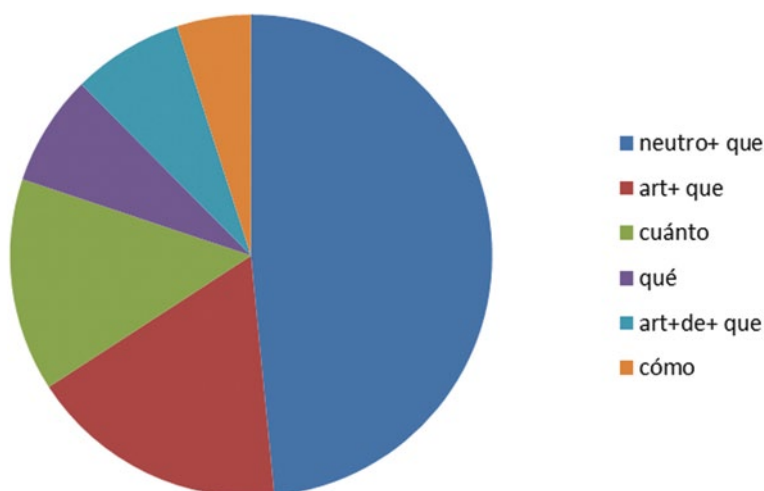


Fig. 30.1 Embedding free relative and *wh*-exclamatives

<sup>7</sup> We conducted a test survey among a population of native Spanish speakers from Spain. A group of 30 individuals from northern Spain was selected, all belonging to the same age cohort (35–38 years old) and with similar education (a university degree). The group consisted of 20 males and 10 females. The main goal of the study was to investigate native speakers’ acceptability of the embeddability of different types of exclamatives (*wh*-constructions and free relatives) by emotive predicates. The participants were presented with a total of 30 short contexts, each of which was followed by three possible sentences that could be felicitous (or not) in the context provided. Participants were instructed to read the contexts carefully and choose the utterance that she/he would find more appropriate. In addition to the experimental items, 10 filler items were included to avoid participant bias with respect to the phenomenon under study. Five of the filler items consisted of embedded interrogatives, and five were embedded declaratives.

- (24) a. ¡Lo listo que es Juan!  
 lo-NEUTER clever that is Juan  
 “How clever Juan is!”  
 b. Es increíble lo listo que es Juan  
 it’s incredible lo-NEUTER clever that is Juan  
 “It’s incredible how clever Juan is”  
 c. Es increíble lo bien que trabaja Juan  
 It’s incredible lo-NEUTER well that works Juan  
 “It’s incredible how well Juan works”

The neuter *lo* is a neuter degree pronoun in (24a). Neuter degree relatives refer to a (maximal) degree (Gutiérrez-Rexach 1999); in (24a) the maximal degree of cleverness/intelligence that Juan is capable of. Thus, proper grounded reference can be established in these constructions, and embedding by emotive predicates is fine (24b, c).

Nominal exclamatives are nominal expressions with the ability to occur as root exclamatives (Portner and Zanuttini 2005). For example, the nominal exclamatives in (25a) can be embedded, as shown in (25b, c):

- (25) a. ¡La de libros que lee Juan!/ ¡Los libros que lee Juan!  
 “Juan reads so many books!”  
 b. Es increíble la de libros que lee Juan  
 “It is incredible the amount of books Juan reads”  
 c. ?Es increíble los libros que lee Juan  
 “It’s incredible the books Juan reads”

There is proper degree reference in (25b), given that the unembedded correlate only has a degree/amount-based reading. The speaker expresses an emotive attitude toward the amount (number) of books read by Juan. On the other hand, in (25c), and its matrix correlate, there would only be accommodated degree reference. Only when such reference is necessary, is it accommodated to prevent a conflict or clash of presuppositions. This is so because free relatives have individual-based denotations, that is, they can be viewed as definite descriptions in disguise (Jacobson 1995). Consider the following contrast:

- (26) a. ?Es increíble lo que dices  
 “it’s incredible lo-NEUTER that you-say”  
 “It’s incredible the things you say”  
 b. Me sorprende lo que cuentas  
 “me-CL surprises lo-NEUTER that you-tell”  
 “It surprises me the things you say”  
 c. Averiguó lo que cuentas de él  
 found-out-he lo-NEUTER that you tell about him  
 “He found out what you are telling around about him”

Sentence (26a) is slightly marginal because the speaker has to accommodate reference to a degree from reference to individuals (the set of statements under consideration). What is stated to be incredible is not what the addressee says, but its outrageous or transgressive nature. This would trigger the emotive attitude of incredulity. When such an emotive attitude is anchored to a speaker, the sentence is fine, because the degree ascription becomes rooted to the speaker’s assessment of a grounding fact. On the other hand, embedding under a standard question/statement-embedding verb, such as *averiguar* “find out” in (26c), requires no accommodation,

because these verbs do not impose a degree requirement. The embedded complement is not an exclamative.

The problem seems to be that factive emotive predicates are able to embed *wh*-exclamatives, but not uniformly. The claim that will be defended in this section is that exclamatives can be embedded by emotive predicates only if they can be grounded to a fact about a specific entity (degree). Two semantic conditions have to be satisfied: (i) the complement of the predicate involves reference to a specific degree; and (ii) the relationship between the predicate and its complement has to be an expression of *de re* knowledge.

In the case of *cómo* “how” and *cuánto* “how much”, the degree property clearly comes from the *wh*-expressions, since these are both degree words. *Wh*-forms of this sort behave as degree words not only in exclamatives but also in interrogative sentences:

- (27) Es increíble cómo/cuánto habla Pepe  
 “It is incredible how much Pepe talks”  
 (27) ¿Cómo es de alto Juan?/¿Cuánto mide Juan?  
 “How tall is Juan?” (What is the degree *d* such that Juan is tall to that degree?)

Notice that *cómo* is not interpreted as a manner adverbial under this construal:

- (28) a. Es increíble cómo habla/come este tío  
 “It is incredible how much this guy talks/eats” (not the manner in which he does it)  
 b. Me sorprende cómo se viste  
 “I am surprised how bad/well he dresses” (not the manner in which he does it)

As the above paraphrases show, the proper interpretation of the above sentences is not a manner-like reading. When uttering (28b), the speaker is not surprised at how the individual under consideration dresses himself. Rather, he is surprised at a degree property, the quality of his clothes (how bad or good they look). Evidence for *de re* knowledge ascription comes from the fact that exclamatives such as (29) would be infelicitous in a situation in which the speaker lacks knowledge about the degree under consideration:

- (29) ¡Cómo/cuánto habla Pepe!  
 “How much Pepe talks!”

The following *wh*-expressions: *what*+adv, *what*+noun, *what*+adj and *what for* where included along with the free relatives (“ART+(*de*)+*que*”) in a multiple-choice type of survey. Only in 8% of the instances the informant preferred the *wh*-word over the free relative (92%). This clearly shows that the former construction seems inappropriate for most speakers:

- (30) Acabas de ver a Nadal ganar otro torneo más, y para mostrar tu admiración le dices a tu hermano/a:  
 (You just watched Nadal winning another tournament, and to show your admiration you say to your brother/sister)  
 a) Me fascina qué bien juega  
 “It amazes me how well he plays”  
 b) Me fascina que juegue al tenis  
 “It amazes me that he plays tennis”  
 c) Me fascina lo bien que juega  
 it amazes me the-NEUT. well that he plays  
 “It amazes me how well he plays”

- (31) Tú y tu madre estáis curioseando los libros que lee tu tío, un aficionado a la astrología.  
 Cuando entra en la habitación, le decís asombradas:  
 (You and your mother are poking your noses into your uncle's book, an amateur astrologist. When he walks into the room, you say to him:)
- (a) Es increíble qué libros lees  
 "It is incredible what books you read"
- (b) Es increíble los libros tan raros que lees  
 "It is incredible the weird books that you read"
- (c) ¡Qué libros lees!  
 what books read-you  
 "The books you read!"

However, the numbers increase considerably when we compare *wh*-words such as *cuánto* "how many" and *cómo* "how." Embedded exclamation heads by these *wh*-words were preferred over the free-relative type in 38% of instances in the case of *cuánto*, and in 17% of instances in the case of *cómo*:

- (32) Hace cuatro meses que no ves a tu sobrina de tres años. Te sorprende la cantidad de cosas que ya sabe decir, así que le comentas a tu hermano:  
 (It has been four months since you saw your three year old niece. It surprises you the amount of things she is able to say already. So, you say to your brother:)
- a) Me sorprende cuánto habla  
 "It surprises me how much she is able to say"
- b) Me sorprende la de cosas de que habla  
 "It surprises me how many things she can talk about"
- c) Me sorprenden las cosas  
 "They surprise me the/such things"

These results are expected since '*qué*+adv/noun/adj', "what+adv/noun/adj" exclamatives receive their degree reading from the exclamative illocutionary operator and, when embedded, this operator is not available. In other words, the reason why *qué*-exclamatives are not the preferred option is that *qué* is not intrinsically a degree word, i.e., the quantificational domain of *qué*-words is a universe of individuals.

Since one of the main proposals (D' Avis 2002; Abels 2004, 2005) on the issue is that interrogatives and exclamatives behave alike, it seems desirable to test whether native speakers accept a *wh*-construction, such as (33), to be embedded by emotive predicates even if such construction does not constitute a proper root exclamative, as in (34–37).

- (33) ¡Cuánto/Cómo bebes!  
 How (much) drink-YOU!  
 "You drink too much!"
- (34) \*¡Cuándo llegas!  
 When arrive-YOU
- (35) \*¡Para qué llegas!  
 What for arrive-YOU
- (36) \* ¡Por qué llegas!  
 Why arrive-YOU
- (37) \* ¡Dónde llegas!  
 Where arrive-YOU

Certain speakers find complements introduced by *para qué*, *dónde*, *por qué*, or *cuándo* to be fine when embedded by emotive predicates, although they do not constitute root exclamatives. For example, the exclamatives in (38a) are not “good” exclamatives, but they are fine for some speakers when embedded:

- (38) a.\* ¡Para qué/dónde/por qué/cuándo trabaja Pepe!  
 “For what/where/why/when Pepe works!”  
 b. Es increíble dónde/cuándo trabaja Pepe  
 “It is incredible where/when Pepe works”  
 c.??Es increíble por qué/para qué te pones ese gorro  
 “It is incredible why you wear that hat”

The *wh*-words *dónde* “where” and *cuándo* “when” introduce measure-based denotations (time, location), facilitating the association with a (extreme) degree. For example, (38b) (OK for many speakers) would be interpreted as “it is incredible how remote the place is where Pepe works”; “It is incredible how late Pepe works.” Such accommodation is more difficult with rationale/goal clauses, although not impossible. And (38c) would receive the interpretation “It is incredible that you wear that hat for such outlandish reasons.”

In sum, the results of the Andueza and Gutierrez-Rexach’s (2012) study showed that the most accepted embedded *wh*-exclamatives are: *cuánto* “how many” (14%), *cómo* “how” (7%), and *qué* “what” (7%), which are also the most common *wh*-words introducing root exclamatives. Exclamatives introduced by *cuándo* “when” (1.2%), *para qué* “what for” (0.6%), *por qué* “why” (0.6%), and *dónde* “where” (0%) are less accepted or not accepted at all, as shown in Fig. 30.2:

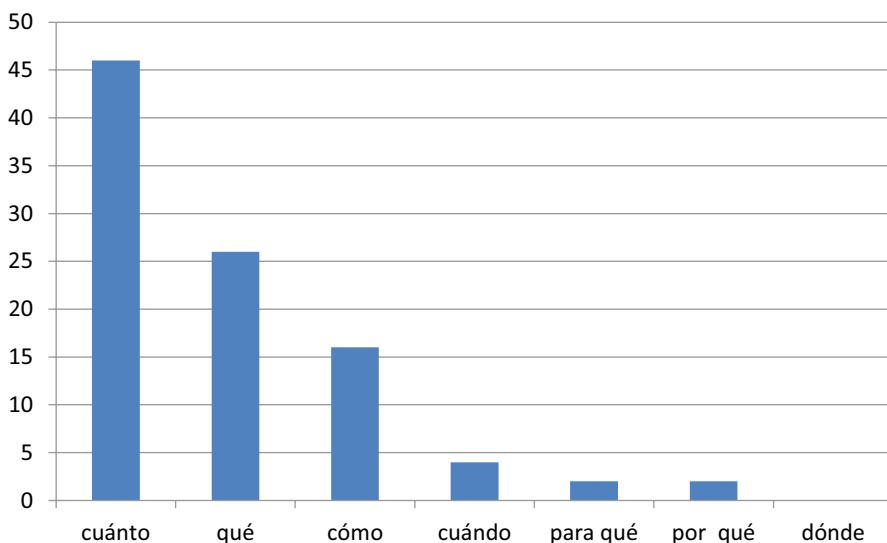


Fig. 30.2 Embedding *wh*-exclamatives

## 5.2 *Embedding Other Exclamative Types*

Concealed exclamatives are noun phrases (NPs) with exclamative interpretation only when embedded (Baker 1968; Elliott 1974; Grimshaw 1979; Castroviejo 2006), as the following contrast shows:

- (39) a. \*¡La altura de ese edificio!  
The height of this building!  
b. Es alucinante la altura del edificio  
it's mind-blowing the height of-the building  
"The height of the building is mind-blowing"  
c. Es increíble su conducta  
it's incredible her behavior  
"Her behavior is incredible"

We claim that this is possible because concealed exclamatives satisfy the definiteness restriction, i.e., only weak or indefinite-like determiners can occur in the construction:

- (40) Es increíble \*una/esa ventana del edificio  
it's incredible \*a/that window of-the building  
"That window of the building is incredible"

All of these environments associate with extreme degree and require restrictive modification, indicating the proper contextual environment for the degree assertion:

- (41) a. Es increíble los propósitos (tan extraños) (por los que trabaja Juan)  
it is incredible the (strange) purposes for what Juan works  
"The strange reasons why Juan works are incredible"  
b. Es increíble los sitios (tan extravagantes) (en los que trabaja Juan)  
it is incredible the (extravagant) places where Juan works  
"The extravagant places where Juan works are incredible"

Portner and Zanuttini (2005) claim that concealed exclamatives have a clause-like meaning, following Kayne's (1994) analysis of relative clauses. According to this account, the definite article indicates factivity. There are potential connections with propositional theories of concealed questions (Nathan 2006; Frana 2010), namely, a concealed exclamative can be argued to denote a proposition, making it equivalent to a full-fledged exclamative. Their "exclamative flavor" has also been claimed to be derived from the meaning of the embedding predicate (Castroviejo 2006). All of this would explain their embedding by emotive predicates.

Summarizing, the interplay of structural and contextual factors would explain variability in the possibility of embedding an exclamative construction or in achieving an exclamative interpretation under a verb that normally embeds such construction (i.e., standard factive emotive predicates). First, the embedded exclamative has to directly express or accommodate reference to a specific degree. Additionally, a process of ascription of *de re* belief to such a degree via the embedding predicate has to take place. The extension to other measure-based denotations (time, location, etc.) is possible, as long as there is accommodation of a degree-based grounding fact. Finally, other nonstandard or nonpropositional exclamative constructions, such as free relatives/nominal/concealed exclamatives, are fine for an embedding process as long these general conditions are satisfied.



Other environments facilitate embedding by emotive factives, but cancel exclamatory interpretations. For example, the addition of genericity triggers blocks such interpretation. In (42), the adverb of quantification *siempre* “always” or the verb *soler* “use to” lead to such a change.

- (42) a. Siempre me sorprende qué cosas dice Juan  
 “I am always surprised by the things Juan says”  
 b. Le suele parecer lamentable/increible/sorprender qué alto ponen el volumen en la discoteca  
 “He usually finds it appalling/incredible/surprising how loud the music is at the disco”

Generic statements express a generalization over worlds or individuals, and have been analyzed as involving reference to kinds (Carlson 1977). Generic quantification is incompatible with *de re* reference to actual individuals in the utterance world. If the line of reasoning we are advocating here is correct, this would entail that beliefs about kinds (i.e., generic beliefs) would not be factually grounded beliefs about the utterance situation/world and would not support exclamatory interpretations. This correctly predicts the readings available for the examples in (42).

Several sentential operators such as the interrogative operator or negation may also be able to block an exclamative interpretation. Thus, in general it is not possible to embed exclamatives in questions or under negation. In the following examples, it can clearly be seen that the *wh*-proposition lacks an exclamative interpretation:

- (43) a. ¿No te sorprende qué cosas suele decir?  
 “Aren’t you surprised by the things he is saying?”  
 b. No me sorprende lo que puede hacer  
 “It does not surprise me what he is capable of doing”

The embedding predicate relates to the question–answer meaning, i.e., to the set of individuals under consideration, not to a salient degree property of such individuals. In (43a), the speaker expresses that he is usually surprised with the content of the addressee’s assertions. Questions and negation also block attribution of *de re* knowledge and facilitate answer-like interpretations. In all these cases, exhaustive (mention all) readings and nonexhaustive readings (mention some) are allowed. For example, in (43b) the speaker may be asking for an exhaustive list of the things the individual under discussion does (mention all) or for one or more instances illustrative of a pattern (mention some). These are typical readings associated with interrogative sentences (Groenendijk and Stokhof 1989), and thus indicate a clear departure from the exclamative interpretation. If one is asking about a particular individual or proposition, he cannot have factual knowledge about the same information, which would be incompatible with this type of speech act.

## 6 Miratives as Exclamatives

The generalization in the literature and what we have seen in the empirical evidence from Spanish presented so far is that exclamative expressions would only be embeddable under emotive factive predicates. Nevertheless, this is not completely correct

from an empirical standpoint. Several non-emotive/non-factive predicates seem to be able to embed genuine exclamatives. One of the most common is *mira* ‘look’:

- (44) a. ¡Miren ustedes qué cosas dice!  
 “Look at the things he says!”  
 b. ¡Mirad quiénes se presentaron!  
 “Look at who showed up!”

There are abundant corpus data instantiating this construction, showing that it is actually very common, especially in oral discourses:

- (45) a. ¡Mira qué guapísimo es! (El corpus del español)  
 “Look at how stunningly handsome he is!”  
 b. ¡Mira qué bien viene la pregunta! (CREA)  
 “Look at how appropriate the question is!”  
 c. ¡Mira qué perrillo! (CREA)  
 “Look at that (nice) doggie!”  
 d. ¡Mira cuántas chinitas hay! (CREA)  
 “Look at how many pebbles there are!”  
 e. ¡Mira cuánto has hablado! (El corpus del español)  
 “Look at how much you talked!”  
 f. Pero, ¡mira cómo beben! (El corpus del español)  
 “Look at how they are drinking!”  
 g. ¡Y mira dónde estoy ahora! (El corpus del español)  
 “Look at where I am now!”  
 h. ¡Mira dónde estás y con quién hablas! (El corpus del español)  
 “Look where you are and who you talk to!”

*Mira* ‘look’ is a directive perception verb. It instructs the addressee to pay attention to a fact. There are other directive perception verbs which allow exclamative embedding, such as *fíjate/fíjaros* ‘pay attention’:

- (46) a. ¡Fíjate qué locuras dice!  
 “Notice the nonsense she is saying!”  
 b. ¡Fíjaros cuántos han venido!  
 “Look at how many came!”  
 c. ¡Fíjaros qué alto está!  
 “Look at how tall he is!”  
 d. ¡Fíjate dónde ha puesto la ropa!  
 “Look at where he put his clothes!”

Nevertheless, other directive perception verbs (*oír* ‘hear,’ *escuchar* ‘listen,’ *atender* ‘pay attention’) cannot embed exclamatives. In some cases, they are not able to embed *wh*-complements in general. The intended construction would be impossible even in a nonexclamatory interpretation, as the following examples illustrate:

- (47) a. \*¡Oye qué locuras dice!  
 “Hear her nonsense!”  
 b. \*¡Escucha qué alto está!  
 “Listen at how tall he is!”  
 c. \*¡Atended dónde lo he visto!  
 “Pay attention to where I have seen him!”

There are several restrictions on the availability of exclamative readings under directive perception verbs. First, only true imperative forms, i.e., those belonging to

the imperative paradigm, are accepted. Surrogate or suppletive forms, i.e., those with other uses which can also be used to express imperative meaning, such as the first person plural present or matrix sentences headed by the complementizer *que*, do not allow embedded exclamatives. This is so even if they convey a meaning which is very close to a genuine exclamative. This point is illustrated by the examples below:

- (48) a. \*¡Miremos qué guapísimo está!  
 “Let us look at how stunningly handsome he is!”  
 b. \*¡Vamos a mirar qué alto está!  
 “We are going to look at how tall he is!”  
 (49) \*¡Que miren qué cosas dice!  
 “You look at the things he says!”

Second, changes in tense specification or the addition of sentential operators such as negation make embedding possible, but only with the interrogative interpretation, not with the exclamative one, as (50) shows:

- (50) a. Miraré cómo beben  
 “I will look at how they drink”  
 b. (No) Me fijé \*(en) cuantos han venido  
 “I did (not) pay attention to how many came”

The data in Andueza and Gutiérrez-Rexach (2012) confirm this point. The verbs *mira* “look” or *fijate* “watch out” seem to embed exclamatives more frequently (84%) than standard embedders (such as *es increíble* “it is incredible”). In this survey, these verbs are also judged by speakers to be more appropriate than emotives to express unambiguous exclamatory content (76%). Additionally, embedded exclamatives headed by *qué* are allowed under these directive predicates. These complements are more frequent (55.4%) than *cómo* (19.6%) and *cuánto* (11.3%). Other *wh*-exclamatives are also possible, although less common.

We will be calling the subclass of perception verbs with the ability to embed *wh*-exclamatives into directive mirative factives (DMFs), such as *mira/fijate*. Let us explain why. First, they have the property of factivity, as illustrated in (51):

- (51) a. \*¡Mira qué cosas dirá!  
 “Look at the things he will say”  
 b. \*¡Mira qué me parece que dijo!  
 “Look what seems that he said”

The sentences above are not acceptable because statements about future events are intrinsically not factive, since such events have not occurred yet. Second, these embedders are mirative. Mirativity conveys information which is new or unexpected to the speaker (De Lancey 2001; Rigau 2003), as illustrated in (52):

- (52) a. Me dio el libro y mira qué tapas tiene  
 “He gave me the book and look at its covers!”  
 b. #Me dio el libro y mira qué ejemplar es  
 “He gave me the book and look what copy it is!”

The second conjunct in (52a) adds the new or unexpected information triggering the speaker’s surprise attitude (the book’s covers look surprising). By contrast, the

information in the second conjunct in (52b) is analytic or redundant so it cannot be embedded under *mira*. Finally, these exclamatives instantiate actual directivity. The addressee is instructed to consider something at the actual world/time (utterance time or world of evaluation). It is not possible to use this type of factive to ask the addressee to consider facts or propositions in a near or distant future, for example.

Let us now characterize DMFs in a formal fashion. We say that a proposition *p* can be embedded by a DMF predicate if and only if the speaker has *de re* knowledge about the fact supporting *p* in the actual world and is instructing the speaker to consider *p*. When exclamatives are embedded by these predicates, the speaker calls the addressee's attention to a specific *de re* proposition. The speaker asks the addressee to ascertain a fact about the specific *de re* element triggering the exclamative. Interestingly, there is no degree requirement on the entity referred to. Such entity (*de re*) may be an individual. Consider (53):

- (53) ¡Mira quién habla!  
 "Look who is talking!"

This sentence does not express an emotive attitude toward the degree to which a property holds. Rather, the speaker is instructing the addressee to consider a relevant proposition. The individual referred to (*de re*) is actually not the one that the speaker expected. All of this would lead to a reanalysis of *mira* as a DMF, not as a mere interjection (RAE 2009; Rodríguez Ramalle 2008).

## 7 Mixed Expressives

So far we have focused on the ability of emotives to embed *wh*-expressions denoting exclamatives. Emotives also embed non-*wh* propositional complements:

- (54) ¡Es increíble que tenga esa pinta!  
 "It is incredible that he looks that bad!"

The associated expressive content is still exclamatory and is contributed by the embedding predicate. The speaker expresses an emotive attitude (incredulity) toward the embedded proposition. DMFs also embed non-*wh* propositions. The expressive content is not necessarily exclamative:

- (55) a. ¡Mira que tiene gracia la cosa (exclamative: anger/regret)  
 "Look, that's not amusing at all!"  
 b. ¡Mira que te tengo dicho que comas más! (exhortative/optative)  
 "Look, I've repeatedly told you that you should eat more!"  
 c. ¡Mira que me voy! (warning)  
 "Look, I'm leaving!"  
 d. ¡Mira que te pego! (threat)  
 "Look, I'm about to hit you!"

Other interjective/defective verbal forms (*vaya*, *anda*, *venga*) embed propositional complements. They have mixed or more flexible expressive content. In other words,

they are used to express exclamatory content plus other expressive content, or just a particular separate expressive content. Consider the following examples:

- (56) a. ¡Vaya que/si se ha comido la sopa! (excl. + incredulity)  
 “He really ate the soup!”  
 b. ¡Vaya que/si me voy a ir! (excl + defiance/threat).  
 “Of course, I am leaving!”
- (57) ¡Anda que no tienes dinero! (excl + refutative).  
 “So you didn’t have any money!”
- (58) ¡Venga con que no quieres salir! (excl + emphatic).  
 “Come on, so you don’t want to go out?”

Sentence (56a) is normally used to convey incredulity (the speaker expected the relevant individual to not like the soup or not eat it), and (56b) to express defiance or a threat (the speaker asserts that he will go no matter what). With (57), a speaker normally refutes a previous claim by the addressee about his rather impoverished financial situation or a similar claim. Sentence (58) would be felicitous as a reply/statement by the addressee implicating that he does not like going out.

Mixed exclamatives have several properties of interest for our purposes. There is no factivity requirement and no *de re* knowledge requirement with respect to an entity (degree/individual). The exclamative content comes from the embedding expression. The speaker expresses a mixed expressive attitude toward a proposition at the utterance time, introducing what we might call an actuality requirement.

Some mixed exclamatives are not embedders of a verbal nature. Rather, from a categorical perspective they are adverbial embedders:

- (59) a. ¡Bien que te fastidia esto!  
 “You are really bothered by this!”  
 b. ¡Por supuesto que te lo daré!  
 “Of course I will give it to you!”

It is interesting to compare this occurrence of exclamative embedding *bien* with emphatic *bien* (Hernanz 2011), illustrated in (60):

- (60) ¡Bien habló el decano ayer!  
 “Great speech by the Dean yesterday!”

In this latter case, the emphatic element *bien* is not just related to exclamative content but also to the event described in the proposition. It would be uttered felicitously when the speaker is conveying that the Dean talked a lot or more than expected. In this respect, this instance of *bien* is not an embedder, just a displaced occurrence of an exclamative marker (Gutiérrez-Rexach 2001). Optional adverbials also work as indicators of differential mixed expressive content, mostly exclamatory plus optative, desiderative, or exhortative as, respectively, illustrated in (61a, 61b, and 61c). There are also nonadverbial evidentiality markers, such as *¡Cuidado/ojo/claro que...!*

- (61) a. ¡(Por favor) que no vuelva!  
 “Please, I wish he doesn't come back!”  
 b. ¡(Dios mío) que me quede como estoy!  
 “God, I wish I can stay as I am!”

- c. ¡(Ojalá) que llegue pronto!  
 “I hope he is here soon!”

To conclude this section, a precise formalization of the content of what can be called mixed expressives is provided. These expressive elements can be viewed as introducing expressive operators. We define EXP as a family of operators  $EXP = \{EX_1 \dots EX_n\}$ . The EXP family of operator generalizes the EXC operator (Gutiérrez-Rexach 1996; Grosz 2011)—cf. also Potts and Roeper (2006); Potts (2005); Kaplan (1989). For  $1 \leq i \leq n$ , an utterance of  $EX_i(\varphi)$  conveys the following: The speaker at the point of utterance has an emotion  $\varepsilon$  (or at least an evaluative attitude  $\varepsilon$ ) toward  $\varphi$ . The speaker intends to express  $\varepsilon$ , rather than describe  $\varepsilon$ . Second,  $\varepsilon$  involves a scale  $S$  on which  $\varphi$  exceeds a salient threshold.  $EX_i$  only combines with scales that are anchored to the speaker and are evaluative/emotive.

## 8 Conclusions

The distribution of embedded exclamatives is a byproduct of several factors: the nature of exclamatives as speech acts, the presuppositional requirements of exclamatives, and the semantics of the embedding predicates. Exclamatives as speech acts express an emotional attitude over an unexpected fact (they ascribe *de re* belief to a degree, cf. Katz 2005). An embedded exclamative has to preserve these features, i.e., embedded exclamatives are *de re* ascriptions and degree referring. The semantics and pragmatics of emotive factive predicates allow them to embed exclamatives headed by degree *wh*-words (*cómo* and *cuánto*) or degree relative propositions (NEUT ART + *que*, ART + *que*). Some directive predicates embed exclamatives in general and impose differential conditions. Other elements embed “mixed” exclamatives, each with its own requirements. Summarizing, then, embedding exclamatory content is not a transparent process. Rather, it consists in an intricate interaction between the pragmatics and semantics requirements of the embedding element and the embedded content.

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# An Assessment of the Negative and Positive Aspects of Stereotypes and the Derogatory and Nonderogatory Uses of Slurs

Adam M. Croom

**Abstract** In a recent study on indirect reports published in *Journal of Pragmatics*, Capone (2010) points out how several leading pragmatic theorists have recently argued that utterance interpretation incorporates societal information such that the final result of semantic and pragmatic interpretation takes sociocultural defaults into account (e.g., Jaszczolt, 2005a). Croom (2013) for one has pointed out how different in-group and out-group speakers have in fact used slurs in different ways, and further suggests that several salient cultural markers can aid in the interpretation of whether a slur is being used derogatorily or nonderogatorily in a given context (p. 200). Thus, for pragmatic theorists concerned with the semantics and pragmatics of slurs more specifically, several highly important yet currently unexplored questions include the following: Are racial slurs always used to express offense, and are racial stereotypes always concerned with negative characteristics? How might the stereotypical features of members that a slur typically targets influence the meaning that slur communicates in context, and how might racial slurs and stereotypes differentially affect members of different races? Concerned with such questions, Embrick and Henricks (2013) recently argued that racial slurs and stereotypes function as symbolic resources that *exclude nonwhite or non-European American minorities, but not whites or European Americans*, from opportunities or resources, and so are *necessarily negative or derogatory irrespective of the particular context of their use* (pp. 197–202). They accordingly advocate an account of racial slurs and stereotypes that is consonant with the *context-insensitive* accounts of Fitten (1993) and Hedger (2013), yet dissonant with the *context-sensitive* accounts of Kennedy (2002) and Croom (2011). The purpose of this chapter is to first briefly explicate the context-insensitive and context-sensitive accounts of racial slurs and stereotypes, consider reasons for why issues concerning the semantics and pragmatics of slurs have often appealed to stereotypes and stereotypical features, and then critically evaluate the main claims that Embrick and Henricks (2013) recently proposed in support of their context-insensitive account by drawing upon empirical evidence on (in-group and out-group uses of) racial slurs and stereotypes (for European Americans and

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African Americans) from recent research in linguistics, sociology, and psychology. The chapter concludes by discussing implications of the present findings for future work in pragmatics on racial slurs and stereotypes.

**Keywords** Slurs · Stereotypes · Semantics · Pragmatics · Reappropriation · in-group vs. out-group · Philosophy of language

## 1 Introduction

In a recent study on indirect reports published in *Journal of Pragmatics*, Capone (2010) points out how several leading pragmatic theorists have recently argued that utterance interpretation incorporates societal information such that the final result of semantic and pragmatic interpretation takes sociocultural defaults into account (for more on the pragmatics of indirect reports, cf. Capone 2013; Capone 2012; for more on default semantics cf. Jaszczolt and Allan 2011; Jaszczolt 1997, 2010a, b, 2005a, b). Croom (2013a) for one has pointed out how different in-group and out-group speakers have in fact used slurs in different ways, and further suggests that several salient cultural markers can aid in the interpretation of whether a slur is being used derogatorily or nonderogatorily in a given context (p. 200). For example, Croom (2013a) points out how speakers may strategically employ linguistic features characteristic of their in-group to strategically signal their in-group status and that several salient cultural markers that can aid in the interpretation of slurs, being used nonderogatorily rather than derogatorily, often include, for example, sameness of stereotypical target features (e.g., members of the same racial in-group using the relevant racial slur between each other, members of the same sexual in-group using the relevant sexist slur between each other, etc.) as well as sameness of communicative medium and style (e.g., members communicate in both the same language and speech style, such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE), etc.).

Thus, for pragmatic theorists concerned with the semantics and pragmatics of slurs more specifically, several highly important yet currently unexplored questions include the following: Are racial slurs always used to express offense, and are racial stereotypes always concerned with negative characteristics? How might the stereotypical features of members that a slur typically targets influence the meaning that slur communicates in context, and how might racial slurs and stereotypes differentially affect members of different races? Concerned with such questions, Embrick and Henricks (2013) recently argued that racial slurs and stereotypes function as symbolic resources that *exclude nonwhite or non-European American minorities, but not whites or European Americans*, from opportunities or resources, and so are *necessarily negative or derogatory irrespective of the particular context of their use*

(pp. 197–202).<sup>1</sup> They accordingly advocate an account of racial slurs and stereotypes that is consonant with the *context-insensitive* accounts of Fitten (1993) and Hedger (2013) yet dissonant with the *context-sensitive* accounts of Kennedy (2002) and Croom (2011). Although Embrick and Henricks (2013) briefly consider the point made by Kennedy (2002) that racial slurs like *nigger* may not *necessarily* be considered as negative or derogatory racial insults, particularly when they are used within certain *in-group contexts* (e.g., when a racial slur towards African Americans is used among fellow African Americans, or when a racial slur towards European Americans is used among fellow European Americans), Embrick and Henricks (2013) clearly assert that they reject this possibility:

Kennedy (2002) argues that the term [*nigger*] has been the most socially consequential racial insult, but adds that *it need not be*. The word carries little meaning without context and to say otherwise is to transform it into a fetish (Kennedy 2002). *We disagree*. The term cannot be abstracted from the context it is derived. It is inseparable from a history of white-on-black oppression in which whites enslaved, lynched, and murdered millions of blacks, and often did so as while using this particular slur. (p. 201, my emphasis)

Embrick and Henricks (2013) thus propose an account of racial slurs and stereotypes that is consonant with that suggested by others like Fitten (1993) and Hedger (2013). In “Fighting Words: No Matter Who Uses Them, Racial Slurs Ultimately Serve To Denigrate and Divide,” for instance, Fitten (1993) boldly claims that:

attempts to “demystify” or “redefine” racial slurs are psychologically impossible [...] the use of racial slurs intra-racially perpetuates within the group all of its negative history and, on some levels, is a form of self-hatred [...] intra-racial references to racial slurs [also] have another effect: They make the group or groups originally responsible for creating stigmatizing language feel that the demeaning historical aspects of the words were, and still are, valid.

Similarly, in “Meaning and Racial Slurs: Derogatory Epithets and the Semantics/Pragmatics Interface,” Hedger (2013) more recently argues that:

No matter the context of conversation, the use of a slur is offensive and expresses contempt. Although Christopher Hom (2008) purports to give some examples of non-derogatory uses of slurs, I follow Anderson and Lepore (2013a) in urging that these examples are clearly offensive. Furthermore, I have yet to find a single informant who sides with Hom (2008) on this issue. Hence, since a slur word is offensive in any context, the offensiveness is part of the semantic meaning of slur words, and is not a result of any peculiar use of slurs. (p. 209)

So in contrast with the *context-sensitive* view of scholars such as Kennedy (2002) and Croom (2011) that holds that the use of racial slurs *are not necessarily derogatory* and that whether their use is considered derogatory or not is *dependent* upon the particular context of its use, Embrick and Henricks (2013) support the *context-insensitive* view of scholars such as Fitten (1993) and Hedger (2013) that holds that the use of racial slurs *are necessarily derogatory* and that whether

<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I often use the terms *European American* and *white*, as well as the terms *African American* and *black*, synonymously, since these respective pairs of terms are often used interchangeably in the extant literature. However, I generally prefer to use the expressions *European American* and *African American*, as these strike my ear as most neutrally descriptive. In all cases, however, I hope it is evidently clear that as a language theorist I have tried to discuss this sensitive issue with extreme care and unprejudiced concern.

their use is considered derogatory or not is *independent* of the particular context of its use (pp. 197–202). Embrick and Henricks (2013) thus argue for the *general* or *unqualified* claim about racial slurs and stereotypes—that the use of racial slurs and stereotypes:

represent how white supremacy is preserved [...] to reinforce material inequities. Because acted-upon epithets [i.e. slurs] and stereotypes are racially unequal, their consequences further crystallize each group’s location within the racial order. They serve as resources that impose, confer, deny, and approve other capital rewards in everyday interactions. That is, they further exclude racial minorities, blacks and Latinas/os in particular, from opportunities and resources, all the while preserving the superior status of whites. (p. 211)

## 2 Slurs, Semantics, and Stereotypical Features

Before turning to carefully consider the context-insensitive account of slurs and stereotypes that Embrick and Henricks (2013) have recently proposed, it would be useful to first briefly consider how issues concerning the semantics and pragmatics of slurs have often appealed to stereotypes and stereotypical features. For instance, in “Slurs and Stereotypes,” Jeshion (2013) discusses how various scholars including “Lynn Tirrell, Tim Williamson, Christopher Hom, Adam Croom, and Liz Camp” (p. 314) have all offered some form of *stereotype semantics for slurs* (SSS) whereby the offensiveness or derogatory content of slur expressions are accounted for by drawing upon stereotypical features of the group members that those slurs are typically used to target.<sup>2</sup> Jeshion (2013) offers at least four reasons for the appeal of such an approach (p. 314), which I roughly rehearse here. First, occasions of slur use towards those that they target often and almost effortlessly bring to mind stereotypes of the target *qua* their membership in the relevant group. Second, occasions of slur use towards those that they target are often extraordinarily harmful to their self-conception and sense of self-worth in ways that pertain to them *qua* their group membership, and one could plausibly explain this by appealing to stereotypes of the target *qua* their membership in the relevant group. Third, slur expressions are more strongly offensive than other pejorative expressions (like *jerk* and *asshole*) and one could plausibly explain this by pointing out that since slur expressions presumably appeal to stereotypes of the target *qua* their membership in the relevant group, whereas other more generally pejorative expressions do not, the class of slur expressions are usually capable of offending targets on a much more specific or personal level than do pejorative expressions (cf. the discussion of slurs and *target aptness* and *lexical aptness* in Croom 2014a, p. 235). And fourth, slur expressions are more strongly prohibited than other pejorative expressions, and one could plausibly explain this by pointing out that since slur expressions are presumably capable of offending targets on a much more specific or personal level than pejorative expressions (on the basis of the third point just considered), it might accordingly seem reasonable to impose relatively stronger prohibitions on slur expressions than on pejorative expressions (cf. the discussion of slurs and prohibition in Anderson and Lepore 2013a, b). These

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Camp 2013; Croom 2013a; Croom 2011; Hom 2010, 2012; Hom 2008; Tirrell 1999a, b, 2012; Williamson 2003, 2009, 2010.

are at least four reasons for why issues concerning the semantics and pragmatics of slurs have often appealed to stereotypes (Jeshion 2013, p. 314).

Further, it has been well argued in the literature that most concepts of natural language correspond to *prototype* or *family resemblance categories* whereby “each item [in a given category] has at least one, and probably several, elements in common with one or more other items, but no, or few, elements are common to all items” (Rosch and Mervis 1975, p. 575; cf. Wittgenstein 1953).<sup>3</sup> Pinker and Prince (1996) further suggest that family resemblance categories are appropriately understood as “generalizations of patterns of property correlations within a set of memorized exemplars” (p. 325), and that they differ from “classical categories” in several important ways, including (1) unlike classical categories, family resemblance categories lack necessary and sufficient conditions for membership, (2) unlike classical categories, family resemblance categories have graded degrees of membership, (3) unlike classical categories, family resemblance categories can often be summarized by an ideal member or prototype, which is sometimes but not always an actual exemplar of the category, (4) unlike classical categories, there are sometimes unclear cases for family resemblance categories, and (5) unlike classical categories, good members of family resemblance categories tend to have characteristic nondefining features (p. 308).

In “The Concept of Family Resemblance in Wittgenstein’s Later Philosophy,” Wennerberg (1967) correctly explains that “Wittgenstein introduced this concept [of family resemblance] in order to attack the traditional doctrine that all the entities which fall under a given term must have some set of properties or features in common, the presence of which makes it correct to subsume an entity under this term” (p. 107), and in line with this insight Pinker and Prince (1996) have highlighted the fact that “Family resemblance categories are defined by correlations among features in sets of similar memorized exemplars, and allow us to make inferences about the observable products of history” (p. 353). So in line with the family-resemblance conception, Croom (2011, 2013a) has suggested that we view some categories of natural language as constellations of properties or features that exhibit “a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail” (Wittgenstein 1953, Sect. 66). In applying such categories in order to communicate some content to a hearer, speakers are able to choose among the categories available in their lexical inventory to pick out that which is, although perhaps not necessarily an “ideal” choice (but importantly, one might even question what “ideal” would mean in such cases, given the trade-offs required to maximize on precision, economy of expression, or politeness strategies), at least *their most apt choice for their current conversational purpose*. For example, in discussing the role that the stereotype associated with a particular slur plays and how the descriptive features involved in that stereotype contribute to the predication of certain content in the application of a slur towards its target in context, Croom

<sup>3</sup> As Wittgenstein (1953) suggests in *Philosophical Investigations*, after considering various cases of activities that are typically considered to count as *games* (e.g., board games, card games, ball games, chess, noughts and crosses, patience, tennis, ring-a-ring-a-roses, etc.): “the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail” (Sect. 66) and that “I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than ‘family resemblances’; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way.—And I shall say: ‘games’ form a family” (Sect. 67).

(2011, 2013a) suggests that the term *nigger* (identified as **N** below) can be usefully understood as a *family resemblance (rather than classical) category* that consists in a constellation of *stereotypical properties* (identified as **P** below) such as the following:

N	( <i>Nigger</i> )
P1	<i>x is African American</i> (Fredrickson 1971, p. 41; Asim 2007, p. 12)
P2	<i>x is prone to laziness</i> (Asim 2007, p. 27)
P3	<i>x is subservient</i> (Fredrickson 1971, p. 41; Asim 2007, p. 12)
P4	<i>x is commonly the recipient of poor treatment</i> (Fredrickson 1971, p. 41; Asim 2007, p. 12)
P5	<i>x is athletic and musical</i> (Alim et al. 2010, p. 128)
P6	<i>x is sexually liberal or licentious</i> (Asim 2007, p. 27)
P7	<i>x is simple minded</i> (Asim 2007, p. 27)
P8	<i>x is emotionally shallow</i> (Asim 2007, p. 27)
P9	<i>x is a survivor, tough, or prone to violence</i> (Anderson 1999, p. 50; Rahman 2012)
P10	<i>x is loud and excessively noisy</i> (Anderson 1999, p. 50)

These properties (P1)–(P10) could be ranked by the order in which their possession by an individual *x* is taken as a salient indicator of category membership (e.g., one could calculate the statistical correlation for each property associated with **N** and rank order them from highest to lowest) with the relative rankings of these properties being adjustable or updatable in accord with changes in context. For instance, property (P1) would be ranked relatively higher than property (P6), and so (P1) would be considered a more salient indicator than (P6) that the individual possessing it is a member of the category **N**. In other words, although (racist or in-group) speakers *typically* ascribe the term *nigger* to target individuals possessing *the highest-ranking property* (e.g., P1) as well as *the most properties* (e.g., P1–P10) in **N**, (racist or in-group) speakers *may still informatively or effectively* ascribe that slur to someone who fails to possess the highest-ranking property (e.g., P1) or even the most properties (e.g., P1–P10) in **N**, given the appropriate context and communicative purpose. *However*, in order for the (racist or in-group) speaker's choice to refer to a target individual as a *nigger* to be considered a *strategically apt choice* for that speaker, it must be thought (or at least assumed for the purpose of the conversation) that the target individual possesses a *practically sufficient set* of properties in (P1)–(P10) such that **N** is *the most appropriate or serviceable category under which to subsume the individual for the purposes of the speaker's current conversational aim*. For instance, if a speaker is intending to communicate that some target that they dislike and consider inferior possesses some subset of the properties (P1)–(P10), then that speaker might strategically choose to employ **N** as the category that most efficiently and economically predicates the intended properties of their target and most forcefully expresses a negative attitude towards them, at least to the extent that **N** is better for this than other categories available to the speaker in their lexical inventory (Croom 2013a, p. 199; Croom 2011, p. 356).

So in contrast with traditional views of slurs, whereby the possession of some criterial feature or property was assumed to be *essential* for an individual's being a member of some category (the category **N**), Croom (2011, 2013a) suggest that, e.g., although different individuals that are referred to as *niggers* are likely to share different subsets of properties (P1)–(P10) with other individuals also referred to by this slur expression, it *need not* be the case that for each slurred individual they *must* share some criterial feature or property with every other slurred individual. Rather, what is of paramount importance on this pragmatic view is whether the employment of a slur on part of the speaker in some particular context may be considered a *strategically apt enough, or optimally relevant, choice for that speaker given their current conversational purpose* (for further discussion of relevance in communication and cognition cf. Wilson and Sperber 2004; Sperber and Wilson 1986).

Now that we have briefly reviewed at least four reasons for why issues concerning the semantics and pragmatics of slurs have often appealed to stereotypes (Jeshion 2013, p. 314), and have also reviewed the role that the stereotype associated with a particular slur plays and how the descriptive features involved in that stereotype contribute to the predication of certain content in the application of a slur towards its target in context (Croom 2013a, p. 199; Croom 2011, p. 356), we can now proceed to carefully consider the context-insensitive account of racial slurs and stereotypes advocated by scholars such as Embrick and Henricks (2013), Fitten (1993), and Hedger (2013), as well as critically evaluate the main claims that Embrick and Henricks (2013) recently proposed in support of their context-insensitive approach by drawing upon empirical evidence on (in-group and out-group uses) racial slurs and stereotypes (for both European Americans and African Americans) from recent research in linguistics, sociology, and psychology.

### 3 Embrick and Henricks (2013) on the Inequality of Slurs and Stereotypes

In “Discursive Colorlines at Work: How Epithets and Stereotypes are Racially Unequal,” Embrick and Henricks (2013) investigated the use of slurs and stereotypes in the workplace by conducting a 6-month case study with the staff of a baked-goods company in the southwestern USA (pp. 199–201). This case study involved informal observations and semistructured interviews of approximately 20%, or 38 members, from the company workforce. Informal observations were recorded 5 days a week and semistructured interviews consisted of 50 questions dealing with issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality. In terms of gender, this group consisted of 90% men and 10% women, and in terms of race this group consisted of 50% European Americans, 25% African Americans, 20% Hispanic Americans, and 5% Asian Americans (for further discussion of methodological issues in this study cf. Sect. 4 of this chapter and Croom 2014c).

Embrick and Henricks (2013) argued from the results of their investigation that racial slurs and stereotypes that are used against “whites” or European Americans

are not equivalent to racial slurs and stereotypes that are used against “non-whites” or “racial minorities, blacks and Latinas/os in particular” (p. 197). Embrick and Henricks (2013) succinctly summarized their position as follows:

From our data, we contend stereotypes are racially unequal in two ways. One, they disproportionately describe whites positively and blacks and Latinas/os negatively. And two, white stereotypes are more three-dimensional, pluralistic, and even contradictory in nature, whereas nonwhite stereotypes, especially black and Latina/o ones, characterize these groups in a one-dimensional, monolithic manner. (p. 207)

Further claims by Embrick and Henricks (2013) about how slurs and stereotypes are racially unequal include the claims that “racial slurs and stereotypes applied to whites by non-whites do not carry the same meaning or outcomes as they do when these roles are swapped” (p. 197), that “Whereas *nigger* and *wetback* are terms typically attached to *all* members of each respective group, some of the most popular white slurs, especially *honky* and *cracker*, have historically been reserved for segments of the white population” (p. 205), that “racial epithets directed toward whites are unlikely to affect their life chances in the same way that racial epithets directed toward minorities do” (p. 197), and that “whites have power and agency to deny and apply epithets and stereotypes to themselves and other groups, while blacks and Latinas/os do not possess such power or privilege” (p. 198). For the sake of clarity I explicate eight of the main claims (C1–C8) maintained by Embrick and Henricks (2013), with (C1)–(C4) concerning racial stereotypes and (C5)–(C8) concerning racial slurs:

- C1: Stereotypes of white European Americans are positive whereas stereotypes of non-white non-European Americans are negative. (p. 207)
- C2: Stereotypes of white European Americans are pluralistic whereas stereotypes of non-white non-European Americans are monolithic. (p. 207)
- C3: Stereotypes applied to white European Americans do not have the same meaning as stereotypes applied to non-white non-European Americans. (p. 197)
- C4: The power to apply and deny stereotypes is held by white European Americans whereas the power to apply and deny stereotypes is not held by non-white non-European Americans. (p. 198)
- C5: Slurs applied to white European Americans are restricted in that they apply to some (but not all) of its prototypical members, whereas slurs applied to non-white non-European Americans are unrestricted in that they apply to (not some but) all of its prototypical members. (p. 205)
- C6: Slurs applied to white European Americans do not have the same meaning as slurs applied to non-white non-European Americans. (p. 197)
- C7: Slurs applied to white European Americans do not affect their life chances, whereas slurs applied to non-white non-European Americans do affect their life chances. (p. 197)
- C8: The power to apply and deny slurs is held by white European Americans, whereas the power to apply and deny slurs is not held by non-white non-European Americans. (p. 198)

Claims (C1), (C2), and (C3) are further clarified with the table that Embrick and Henricks (2013) provide outlining “Common Stereotypes for Whites, Blacks, and Latinas/os” (cf. Table 1, p. 207).



**Table 1** Common racial stereotypes reported by Embrick and Henricks (2013, p. 207)

Whites	Blacks	Latinas/os
Individualistic (in principle, everyone is equal)	Lazy, no work ethic, undependable	Hypersensitive to racial issues
Meritocratic (success is based on hard work and determination)	Hypersensitive to racial issues	Culturally distinct: group centered, familial centered
Elite, powerful (possesses much privilege and authority)	Biologically different: intellectually inferior, beast-like physical features	Inhuman, animal like
Noble, humanitarian	Dependency mentality ("freeloader" mindset)	All of Mexican decent
"Hillbilly," "rednecks"	Primitive, savages, inhuman	Prone to violence
Rich and wealthy	Deviant, criminal minded	Lazy, no work ethic, undependable
	Worthless	
	Destined for menial, physical labor	
	Prone to violence	

In this table, Embrick and Henricks (2013) suggest that stereotypes for white European Americans are almost exclusively positive: with the exception of the two perhaps slightly insulting names “Hillbilly” and “rednecks,” they ascribed whites or European Americans predominantly positive stereotypes including “individualistic,” “meritocratic,” “elite,” “powerful (possess much privilege and authority),” “noble,” “humanitarian,” and “rich and wealthy” (p. 207). Yet, Embrick and Henricks (2013) suggest that stereotypes for nonwhite African Americans, in contrast to those for white European Americans, are exclusively negative: without exception they ascribed African Americans exclusively negative stereotypes including “lazy,” “no work ethic,” “undependable,” “biologically different,” “intellectually inferior,” “beast-like physical features,” “dependency mentality (“freeloader” mindset),” “primitive,” “savages,” “inhuman,” “deviant,” “criminal-minded,” “worthless,” “destined for menial, physical labor,” “prone to violence,” and “hyper-sensitive to racial issues” (p. 207).<sup>4</sup> Given their table, claiming that stereotypes for nonwhite African Americans are exclusively negative whereas stereotypes for white European Americans are for the most part positive, Embrick and Henricks (2013) suggested that “white epithets carry no *real* negative consequences for most whites” and that “whites [and whites alone] are afforded sanctuary from epithets and stereotypes that have historically justified the mistreatment of certain groups of people” (p. 198). Before arguing in the next section that Embrick and Henricks (2013) are incorrect in arguing for (C1), (C2), (C4), (C5), (C7), and (C8), I first argue in this section that Embrick and Henricks (2013) are correct in arguing for (C3) and (C6).

First consider claim 3 (C3) by Embrick and Henricks (2013), which holds that stereotypes applied to white European Americans do not have the same meaning as stereotypes applied to nonwhite African Americans (p. 197). I argue that they are correct in arguing for (C3) since there are studies that support the claim that stereotypes applied to white European Americans do not have the same meaning as stereotypes applied to nonwhite African Americans (i.e., European Americans and African Americans have different stereotypes). For instance, Block et al. (2012) had participants assess stereotypes and rate the likelihood that characteristics from each scale of the diagnostic ratio approach were descriptive of white European and nonwhite African American managers (p. E128); in agreement with (C3), evidence from this study suggests that stereotypes applied to white European Americans do not have the same meaning as stereotypes applied to nonwhite African Americans, since “White managers were stereotyped as more competent, ambitious, and manipulative; whereas Black managers were stereotyped as more interpersonally skilled

<sup>4</sup> Due to space constraints, I restrict the discussion of nonwhite minorities in this chapter to African Americans and do not further discuss empirical data concerning other nonwhite minority groups such as Hispanic Americans or Asian Americans, even though many of the points made in this chapter concerning African Americans do apply to other minority groups (including Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans) also. I focus the discussion here on African Americans because (1) this appears to be the first and most salient minority racial group Embrick and Henricks (2013) consider (p. 201), and (2) this appears to be the minority racial group from which the most empirical data can be gathered. I therefore reserve discussion of other minority groups, such as Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans, for future work cf. Croom (2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013a, b, 2014a, b, c).

and less polished” (p. E128). In another study, Ryan et al. (1996) had participants judge the variability and provide trait and confidence judgments of hypothetical group members (p. 199), and in agreement with (C3) evidence from this study also suggests that stereotypes applied to white European Americans do not have the same meaning as stereotypes applied to nonwhite African Americans, since “Blacks were seen as more likely to be violent and have run-ins with the police than [in the case of] Whites [...] Similarly, Blacks were seen as less likely to be whimpy than Whites [...] the data indicate that the stereotype of African Americans as aggressive [in comparison to European Americans] remains intact today” (p. 95). Bucholtz (2011a) further analyzed a dataset of Hollywood films ( $n=56$ ) that were released between 1980 and 2008 and concluded from her analysis that throughout popular culture there was “a widely circulating ideology of black masculinity as hyperphysical and hypersexual (Hooks 1992) and of white masculinity as physically awkward, uptight, and emotionally disconnected” (p. 259; cf. Bucholtz 1999). Evidence of this kind that shows that stereotypes applied to white European Americans do not have the same meaning as stereotypes applied to nonwhite African Americans therefore suggests that Embrick and Henricks (2013) are correct in arguing for (C3).

Next, consider claim 6 (C6) by Embrick and Henricks (2013), which holds that slurs applied to white European Americans do not have the same meaning as slurs applied to nonwhite African Americans (p. 197). I argue that they are correct in arguing for (C6) since there are studies that support the claim that slurs applied to white European Americans do not have the same meaning as slurs applied to nonwhite African Americans (i.e., slurs applied to European Americans and African Americans have different meanings). Bucholtz (2011a) for one offers evidence in accord with (C6) suggesting that slurs applied to white European Americans do not have the same meaning as slurs applied to nonwhite African Americans, since the meaning of the racial slur *wigger* or *wigga* concerns primarily “a white male hip hop fan, typically middle-class and suburban, often laughably inauthentic” whereas the meaning of the racial slur *nigger* or *nigga* concerns primarily “urban African American youth [...] being playas and gangstas—hard, cool, and down” (Bucholtz 2011a, p. 257, 259, my emphasis).<sup>5</sup> Foreman (2013) and Lemon (2013) also discuss some of the history of racial slurs directed towards white European Americans and nonwhite African Americans, respectively, and in agreement with (C6) evidence

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<sup>5</sup> Croom (2014a) has also clarified the differential meanings of different slurs by pointing out how “an application of a particular slur in context does not occur at random, but instead based on considerations of their systematic differential application—conditions, which concern descriptive features of targets such as their racial or sexual identity. This is not only how speakers are able to systematically distinguish between relatively broader categories of slurs (e.g., the racial slur *nigger* from the sexual slur *faggot*) but further how speakers are able to systematically distinguish between relatively narrower categories of slurs (e.g., the racial slur *nigger* from the racial slur *gook*) within those broader categories. That there are in fact different types of slurs applied differentially towards targets is noncontroversial—as Anderson and Lepore (2013a) rightly point out, there in fact exists a large variety of slurs ‘that target groups on the basis of race (“nigger”), nationality (“kraut”), religion (“kike”), gender (“bitch”), sexual orientation (“fag”), immigrant status (“wetback”) and sundry other demographics’ (p. 25)—and accounting for this basic fact has been outlined in prior work as one of several conditions to be met by any explanatorily adequate account of slurs” (p. 228).

from these reports suggest that slurs applied to white European Americans do not have the same meaning as slurs applied to nonwhite African Americans, since the racial slur *cracker* “is a demeaning, bigoted term [...] a sharp racial insult that resonates with *white southerners*” (Foreman 2013) whereas the racial slur *nigger* is a “dark, degrading hateful insult for *African Americans*” (Lemon 2013, my emphases). Evidence of this kind showing that slurs applied to white European Americans do not have the same meaning as slurs applied to nonwhite African Americans therefore suggests that Embrick and Henricks (2013) are correct in arguing for (C6).

#### 4 A Critical Assessment of How Unequal Slurs and Stereotypes Are

Having now explained why Embrick and Henricks (2013) are correct in arguing for (C3) and (C6), I now show that they are incorrect in arguing for (C1), (C2), (C4), (C5), (C7), and (C8). First consider claim 1 (C1) by Embrick and Henricks (2013), which holds that stereotypes of white European Americans are positive whereas stereotypes of nonwhite African Americans are negative (p. 207). I argue that they are incorrect in arguing for (C1) since there are studies that support the claim that some stereotypes of white European Americans are negative and that some stereotypes of nonwhite African Americans are positive. For instance, Bucholtz (2001) conducted ethnographic fieldwork (1995–1996) on white European American students at Bay City High School in San Francisco, California, and focused on investigating how these students enact and manage their social identities, and in disagreement with (C1) evidence from this study suggests that white European Americans do have negative stereotypes, including characterizations of being “nerds,” “social underachievers,” “intellectual overachievers,” and “uncool” (p. 86). Bucholtz (2001) explains how white European American students that enact “an extreme version of whiteness” are considered “nerds” and “are members of a stigmatized social category” (p. 86, 85). In another study, Bucholtz and Lopez (2011) analyzed a large dataset of Hollywood films and focused on investigating how these Hollywood films stereotyped white European American and nonwhite African American social identities (p. 682) in disagreement with (C1) evidence from this study also suggests that white European Americans do have negative stereotypes, including characterizations of “white masculinity as inadequate” (p. 698), being “uptight” (p. 682), “physically and emotionally repressed” (p. 698), “inauthentic” (p. 698), and “deficient” in qualities “including coolness, physical toughness, and sexual self-confidence” (p. 682). Bucholtz and Lopez (2011) point out, for example, how recent Hollywood films have popularly highlighted “the instability of racial, gender, and class hegemonomies in the current sociohistorical era” which includes “a newly vulnerable white middle-class masculinity” (p. 698, 681).

Furthermore, Hughey (2012) conducted ethnographic fieldwork (2006–2007) on white European American members of an antiracist group in the mid-Atlantic USA and focused on investigating how these members enact and manage their social identities, and in disagreement with (C1) evidence from this study also suggests that

white European Americans do have negative stereotypes, including characterizations of being “inherently racist” (p. 231), “hypocrites reaping racial privilege from an unequal social order,” and “unerring beneficiaries of white supremacy” (p. 227). Hughey (2012) explains how “The respondents in this study perceived their whiteness as inherently stigmatized due to their participation in racial segregation, their possession of racial stereotypes, and their lack of serious political and social unification with people of color” (p. 226). In another study, Storrs (1999) conducted ethnographic fieldwork on mixed-race women of white and nonwhite ancestry in the northwestern USA and focused on investigating how these women enact and manage their social identities, and in disagreement with (C1) evidence from this study also suggests that white European Americans do have negative stereotypes, including characterizations of being “discriminatory,” “oppressive,” “racist,” “patriarchal,” “bland,” “tasteless,” “devoid of meaning,” and “boring as the spiceless foods they prefer” (pp. 195–196). As Storrs (1999) explains, “These women reject their white ancestry and culture because of their interpretation of this culture, and their ancestors, as racist, patriarchal, and discriminatory. Their narratives reveal that this negative characterization also captures, for them, the attitudes and behaviors of most whites [...] as biased and prejudiced by virtue of their social location in the racial hierarchy” (p. 197, 196).

Not only do Embrick and Henricks (2013) overemphasize the robustness of positive stereotypes for white European Americans but they also further overemphasize the negative stereotypes for nonwhite African Americans as well. For instance, Czopp and Monteith (2006) conducted a study involving students ( $n=4404$ ) in Lexington, Kentucky, and focused on investigating how students stereotyped white European American and nonwhite African American social identities; in disagreement with (C1) evidence from this study suggest that nonwhite African Americans do have positive stereotypes, including characterizations of being “hip” (p. 235), “socially savvy” (p. 235), “friendly” (p. 243), “funny” (p. 243), “family-oriented” (p. 243), “confident” (p. 243), “ambitious” (p. 243), “proud” (p. 243), “respectable” (p. 243), “underappreciated” (p. 243), “successful” (p. 243), “smart/educated” (p. 243), “good speakers” (p. 243), “good cooks” (p. 243), “open-minded” (p. 243), “artistic” (p. 243), “full of soul” (p. 243), “musically talented” (p. 243), “good dancers” (p. 243), “good at sports” (p. 243), “muscular” (p. 243), “good looking” (p. 243), “fashionable” (p. 235), “very attractive and stylish in their appearance and their physical and verbal mannerisms” (p. 235), and exuding a sense of “sexual mystique” (p. 235), “social and sexual competence” (p. 235), and “a unique sense of ‘coolness’ ” (p. 235). Czopp and Monteith (2006) explain how “Racial prejudice toward African Americans has been largely measured and researched in terms of negative and hostile attitudes. However, there is considerable research to suggest the prevalence of evaluatively positive beliefs about Blacks” (p. 233; cf. Sniderman and Piazza 2002). In yet another study, Cutler (2007) analyzed a dataset of recorded Master of Ceremonies (MC) Battles and focused on investigating how white European Americans and nonwhite African Americans stereotyped social identities in these filmed hip-hop battles (p. 682); in disagreement with (C1) evidence from this study also suggests that nonwhite African Americans do have positive stereotypes, including characterizations of being “authentic” (p. 10), “real” (p. 11), “urban” (p. 17),

“streetwise” (p. 17), “cool” (p. 17), “artistic creators” (p. 10), “trend setters” (p. 10), and “entrepreneurs” (p. 10). As Cutler (2007) explains, “There is quite a powerful discourse within hip-hop that privileges the Black body and the Black urban street experience and despite the visibility of White rappers such as Eminem, Whiteness is still marked against the backdrop of normative Blackness” with “Whites [often] being [stereotyped as] *wannabes* and dilettantes who think they can cross racial boundaries and participate in another cultural domain” (p. 10, 16; cf. Cutler 2009).

Further still, Bucholtz and Lopez (2011) offered evidence from their study suggesting that, in disagreement with (C1), nonwhite African Americans do have positive stereotypes, including characterizations of “coolness” (p. 682), “confidence” (p. 698), “sexual self-assurance” (p. 699), “physical toughness” (p. 682), and “the ability to speak forthrightly” (p. 698). Bucholtz and Lopez (2011) mention how Hollywood films have popularly highlighted “the instability of racial, gender, and class hegemonies in the current sociohistorical era” that includes an “apparently positive valorization of African American culture and identity” (p. 698). One last source of evidence suggesting, in disagreement with (C1), that nonwhite African Americans do have positive stereotypes comes from Storrs (1999) who offers evidence suggesting that stereotypes of African Americans included characterizations of being “more interesting,” “spicy,” and exhibiting “zest,” “finesse,” and “a sort of in your face attitude” (p. 195). Storrs (1999) explains that since “[i]n their family and personal experiences, whites are stigmatized as the oppressors,” and “[g]iven the dichotomous construction of racial boundaries, women portrayed non-whites in a contrasting manner by highlighting positive cultural characteristics” (p. 197). As Storrs (1999) further remarks:

the respondents in this study are not the only ones who are challenging racial meanings. In some ways, the women’s actions parallel the multiracial social movement that is occurring nationally. This larger movement attempts to shift racially mixed persons from a stigmatized category to one that is legitimately recognized and positively affirmed by the public. (p. 210)

Evidence of this kind, that shows that some stereotypes of white European Americans are negative and that some stereotypes of nonwhite African Americans are positive, therefore suggests that Embrick and Henricks (2013) are incorrect in arguing for (C1).

Next, consider claim 2 (C2) by Embrick and Henricks (2013), which holds that stereotypes of white European Americans are pluralistic whereas stereotypes of nonwhite African Americans are monolithic (p. 207). I argue that they are incorrect in arguing for (C2) since there are studies that support the claim that stereotypes of nonwhite African Americans (along with white European Americans) are pluralistic rather than monolithic. For instance, Ryan et al. (1996) had participants judge target groups with respect to 16 attributes<sup>6</sup> that included both traits and attitude statements,<sup>6</sup> and in disagreement with (C2) evidence from this study suggests that stereotypes of nonwhite African Americans are pluralistic rather than monolithic, since stereotypes for African Americans included both negative and positive attributes.<sup>7</sup> Examples of negative

<sup>6</sup> The attributes and the mean percentages of African Americans and European Americans that were perceived to possess each of them are presented in Table 2 of Ryan et al. (1996), p. 86.

<sup>7</sup> Ryan et al. (1996) further mention that, “Black and White subjects agreed in their judgments of the attributes that were stereotypic and counterstereotypic of the two target groups” (p. 87).

traits for African Americans included “poor” and “superstitious” and examples of negative attitude statements for African Americans included “I’ve had a lot of run-ins with the police” and “I just can’t seem to keep a job very long,” whereas examples of positive traits for African Americans included “streetwise” and “emotionally expressive” and examples of positive attitude statements for African Americans included “I would enjoy singing in a church choir” and “I grew up close to my cousins, aunts, and uncles” (Ryan et al. 1996, p. 86).<sup>8</sup> The point here that stereotypes of nonwhite African Americans are pluralistic rather than monolithic has likewise been addressed by Czopp and Monteith (2006) who have properly pointed out that:

When discussing issues related to interracial conflict, many people tend to assume that Whites’ perceptions of Blacks largely reflect hostility and antipathy. However, there is a good deal of research suggesting that Whites’ views of Blacks are not uniformly negative but represent a duality of positive and negative attributes. (p. 233)

Evidence of this kind, that shows that stereotypes of nonwhite African Americans (along with white European Americans) are pluralistic rather than monolithic, therefore suggests that Embrick and Henricks (2013) are incorrect in arguing for (C2).

Next, consider claim 4 (C4) by Embrick and Henricks (2013), which holds that the power to apply and deny stereotypes is held by white European Americans whereas the power to apply and deny stereotypes is not held by nonwhite African Americans (p. 198). I argue that they are incorrect in arguing for (C4) since there are studies that support the claim that the power to apply and deny stereotypes is not held exclusively by white European Americans. For instance, Cutler (2003) conducted fieldwork in New York City on white European American hip-hop participants, and in disagreement with (C4), evidence from this study suggests that the power to apply and deny stereotypes is not held exclusively by white European Americans, since they often have to “fight an uphill battle” against the many negative stereotypes directed against them within a thriving hip-hop culture (p. 224).<sup>9</sup> Cutler (2003) explains this by pointing out how:

Hip-hop’s rootedness in underprivileged urban African American communities as well as its inherent antiestablishment ideology casts the participation of privileged white youth who represent part of that establishment into stark relief. Within hip-hop, the unequal black-white binary is subverted; blackness emerges as normative and authentic and whiteness—usually the unmarked invisible category—becomes visible and marked. (p. 229)

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<sup>8</sup> Evidence from this study also suggests that stereotypes of European Americans are pluralistic rather than monolithic, since stereotypes for European Americans included both negative and positive attributes as well. For instance, examples of negative traits for European Americans included “sheltered” and “stuffy” and examples of negative attitude statements for European Americans included “I believe my job is more important than family” and “I have usually been given whatever material things I needed or wanted without having to work for them,” whereas examples of positive traits for European Americans included “competitive” and “organized” and examples of positive attitude statements for European Americans included “If you want to get ahead, you have to take charge” and “A kid growing up in the U.S. has unlimited opportunities” (Ryan et al. 1996, p. 86).

<sup>9</sup> For more on language use and identity in the context of hip hop culture, cf. Alim 2002, 2003a, b, 2004, 2005a, b, 2006, 2009a, b, c; Alim and Baugh 2006; Alim et al. 2009, 2010; Lee 2009a, b; Boyd 2002; Smitherman 2000; Baugh 1983.

In another study, Rahman (2007) analyzed the language use of speakers from a dataset of comedic narratives ( $n=15$ ) and focused on investigating how these comedic narratives stereotyped white European American and nonwhite African American social identities (p. 682), and in disagreement with (C4), evidence from this study also suggests that the power to apply and deny stereotypes is not held exclusively by white European Americans, since often:

African American characters are cast as humanly and culturally rich survivors whose common sense and resilience allow them to “make a way out of no way.” In contrast, [the white middle-class] establishment characters appear as narrowly logical, ethnically bland, and ineffectual. The positive portrayal of African Americans is itself a tool of survival that stems from a self-empowering community ideology that serves as a buffer against the effects of perceived racism. (p. 65; cf. Rahman 2004)

Indeed, in “Stereotype Lift”, Walton and Cohen (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of relevant empirical studies ( $n=43$ ) on stereotypes and found that “when a negative stereotype impugns the ability or worth of an outgroup,”—where the *out-group* in cases like Rahman’s (2007) are *those of the white European American middle-class establishment*—“people [of the in-group] may experience *stereotype lift*—a performance boost that occurs when downward comparisons are made with a denigrated outgroup” (p. 456) which “is assumed to alleviate the doubt, anxiety, or fear of rejection [of in-group members] that accompanies the threat of failure” from engaging with those that are considered out-group members in relation to them (p. 457).

In yet another study, Norton and Sommers (2011) had participants ( $n=417$ ) rate on a ten-point scale the extent to which they felt both white European Americans and nonwhite African Americans were the targets of discrimination in each decade from the 1950s to the 2000s (p. 216), and in disagreement with (C4), evidence from this study also suggests that the power to apply and deny stereotypes is not held exclusively by white European Americans, since there is now “a broader belief in a new, generalized anti-White bias”, and “that Whites now believe that anti-White bias is more prevalent than anti-Black bias” (p. 217). Norton and Sommers (2011) further explain that “White respondents were more likely to see decreases in bias against Blacks as related to increases in bias against Whites—consistent with a zero-sum view of racism among Whites” and that “not only do Whites think more progress has been made toward equality than do Blacks, but Whites also now believe that this progress is linked to a new inequality—at their expense” (p. 217).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to note here how the *perception* of power could bear on the *actualization* of power in social contexts. For instance, as Brown and Levinson (1978) have previously proposed, a speaker S who implicates through their use of language that they are of higher social status or more powerful than their hearer H is engaging in talk that “is risky, but if he [the agent or speaker] gets away with it (H doesn’t retaliate, for whatever reason), S succeeds in actually altering the public definition of his relationship to H: that is, his successful exploitation becomes part of the history of interaction, and thereby alters the agreed values of D [social distance between S and H] or P [relative power between S and H]” (1978, p. 228). Accordingly, since our social identities are in part determined by the way that we are socially perceived, and so the way that social members come to interact and continue to interact with us (Goffman 1967), the derogative use of slurs can be extremely destructive to the actual character of an individual that it attacks (Croom 2011, p. 354). Croom (2011) has also previously suggested that “By ridiculing or derogating a member based on certain negative properties or features, the speaker employing the slur can support, enforce, and



Evidence of this kind that shows that the power to apply and deny stereotypes is not held exclusively by white European Americans therefore suggests that Embrick and Henricks (2013) are incorrect in arguing for (C4).

Next, consider claim 5 (C5) by Embrick and Henricks (2013), which holds that slurs applied to white European Americans are restricted in that they apply to some (but not all) of its prototypical members whereas slurs applied to nonwhite African Americans are unrestricted in that they apply to (not some but) all of its prototypical members (p. 205). I argue that they are incorrect in arguing for (C5) since independent reports support the claim that slurs applied to nonwhite African Americans (as with white European Americans) are restricted in that they apply to some (but not all) of its prototypical members. One especially clear source of evidence for this point comes from MacDonald (2000), who discusses how slurs were used in his linguistic community and offers evidence suggesting that, in disagreement with (C5), the racial slur *nigger* was in fact restricted in that it was used to apply to some (but not all) African Americans. As MacDonald (2000) reports in *All Souls: A Family Story from Southie*:

Of course, no one considered himself a nigger. It was always something you called someone who could be considered anything less than you. I soon found out that there were a few black families living in Old Colony. They'd lived there for years and everyone said that they were okay, that they weren't niggers but just black. (pp. 60–61)

The “few black families living in Old Colony [...] weren't niggers but just black,” as MacDonald (2000) points out, because “They'd live there for years and everyone said they were okay” whereas the term “nigger” was understood as “always something you called someone who could be considered anything less than you” (pp. 60–61). So, in this case the racial slur *nigger* is *restricted* in that it is used by speakers to apply (if at all) to *some* African Americans—specifically, *just those* that the speaker does not consider okay but rather as inferior or not okay—but *not (necessarily) to all* of them. This is the explicit point MacDonald (2000) is making when he says of some of the African American families living in Old Colony, that “they weren't niggers but just black” (p. 61, my emphasis).

Another especially clear source of evidence for this point comes from Szekely (2008), who discusses how slurs were used in his linguistic community and offers evidence suggesting that, in disagreement with (C5), the sexist slur *faggot* was in fact restricted in that it was used to apply to some (but not all) homosexuals. As Szekely (2008) reports in his well-executed stand-up performance *Chewed Up*:

*faggot* didn't mean gay when I was a kid, you called someone a *faggot* for *being a faggot*, you know? [...] “you're not supposed to use those for that” [said in an annoying mocking voice as if from another person, then Louis C.K. Szekely replies normally] “shut up *faggot!*” [...] I would never call a gay guy a *faggot*, unless he was *being a faggot*. But *not* because he's gay, you understand. (quoted also in Croom 2011, p. 352)

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contribute to a history of acts that negatively alter the social identity of targeted members. This is done, presumably, for the purpose of increasing the difference in asymmetrical power relations among the interlocutors in the specific conversational context, or among the groups to which they belong more generally” (p. 354). For further discussion of this issue, see Croom 2011, p. 354 and Croom 2013a, pp. 185–186.

So, in this case the sex-based slur *faggot* is *restricted* in that it is used by speakers to apply (if at all) to *some* homosexuals—specifically, *just those* that the speaker does not consider okay but rather as inferior or not okay—but *not (necessarily) to all* of them. This is the very point that Szekely (2008) is making when he says, “I would never call a gay guy a *faggot*, unless he was *being a faggot*. But *not* because he’s gay, you understand.” So in a way similar to the case of race-based slurs like *nigger* discussed by MacDonald (2000), we see that sex-based slurs like *faggot* are also restricted in that they are used (if at all) to apply to *some but not necessarily all* homosexuals.

Croom (2013a) has accounted for cases such as these by suggesting that racial slurs like *nigger* (and *faggot*) are restricted in that they are used (if at all) to apply to some but not necessarily all African Americans (and homosexuals), at least partly because the linguistic expressions *nigger* and *African American* (as well as *faggot* and *homosexual*) are understood to be of functionally distinct kinds and thus differing in their conditions of application (pp. 178–182; cf. Croom 2011, p. 345).<sup>11</sup> The erroneous assumption that the racial slur *nigger* (and *faggot*) *must* for the sake of felicity apply to *all* African Americans (or homosexuals, i.e., that the racial slurs *nigger* and *faggot* are unrestricted in their use), for instance, is grounded on the equally erroneous assumption that the linguistic expressions *nigger* and *African American* (as well as *faggot* and *homosexual*) are of the same functional kind, which has already been seriously undermined in the extant literature (cf. Croom 2013a, pp. 178–182; Croom 2011, pp. 345–347). In other words, the uses of racial slurs like *nigger* are not just restricted by *racial descriptions like African American* but are further restricted by *whether the speaker intends to convey an evaluative attitude towards the racial target or not*. (Notice that it is because speakers come to understand what a slur *S* is generally used to accomplish that they will selectively choose to use *S* in cases where they intend to accomplish the kind of action that the use of *S* generally affords. And it is in this kind of way that uses of racial slurs by speakers are typically constrained by their intentions.) Further, since competent speakers generally understand what specific words are used to accomplish, a speaker’s choice to use a specific word (e.g., a slur expression) rather than another (e.g., a descriptive expression) can indicate to others what that speaker intends to do (e.g., communicate out-group derogation or in-group affiliation). As Croom (2013a) explains, the functional difference between slur expressions and descriptive expressions as contrasting kinds of linguistic resources is that

slurring terms such as *nigger* differ from descriptive terms such as *African American* [or *black*] in that the former is commonly understood to carry derogatory force whereas the latter is not [...] That is to say, identifying someone as *African American* [or *black*] is not typically understood as an act of derogation but rather one of straightforward description,

<sup>11</sup> For a more comprehensive and nuanced account of slurs, cf. Croom (2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013a, b, 2014a, b, c, d, e). For example, in previously published work I use a “family resemblance” (Wittgenstein 1953) conception of category membership to show how the felicitous application of a slur *S* need not target someone instantiating an associated neutral descriptive property *N*, so that the felicitous application of the slur *nigger* need not be restricted to African Americans and the felicitous application of the slur *faggot* need not be restricted to homosexuals (cf. Croom 2013a, pp. 190, 194–199; Croom 2011, pp. 352–357).

whereas identifying someone as a *nigger* typically is understood as an act of derogation. Accordingly [...] slurring terms and descriptive terms are understood by speakers to be of functionally different kinds, and [so it follows] that speakers will in turn use these terms differently in their communicative exchanges. (p. 179)

Evidence of this kind that shows that slurs are generally restricted in that they apply to some (but not all) of its prototypical members therefore suggests that Embrick and Henricks (2013) are incorrect in arguing for (C5).

Next, consider claim 7 (C7) by Embrick and Henricks (2013), which holds that slurs applied to white European Americans do not affect their life chances whereas slurs applied to nonwhite African Americans do affect their life chances (p. 197). Embrick and Henricks (2013) further explicate this claim by asserting that “white epithets carry no *real* negative consequences for most whites” and that “whites are afforded sanctuary from epithets and stereotypes that have historically justified the mistreatment of certain groups of people” (p. 198). I argue that they are incorrect in arguing for (C7) since there are studies and explicit reports that support the claim that slurs applied to white European Americans (along with nonwhite African Americans) do affect their life chances. For instance, Foreman (2013) discusses the use of the racial slur *cracker* applied to white European Americans and suggests that “for plenty of rural, white southerners, “cracker” is a demeaning, bigoted term [...] a sharp racial insult that resonates with white southerners [...] offensive and evidence of ill intent.” Consider also how Bucholtz (2011a) discusses the use of the racial slur *wigger* applied to white European Americans and suggests that it primarily targets “white male hip hop fan[s], typically middle-class and suburban, [that are] often laughably inauthentic,” “illegitimate,” and stereotypically considered to possess a “failed masculinity” (p. 257, 259). As Bucholtz (2011a) explains, the discriminatory effects of white European Americans being targeted by racial slurs like *cracker* and *wigger* “rests on a widely circulating ideology of black masculinity as hyperphysical and hypersexual (Hooks 1992) and of white masculinity as physically awkward, uptight, and emotionally disconnected (Pfeil 1995)” (p. 259). Accordingly, insofar as racial slurs like *cracker* and *wigger* function to sharply insult their white European American targets, to express evidence of ill intent towards their white European American targets, or to predicate or perpetuate stereotypically negative properties (such as being laughably inauthentic or having a failed masculinity) of their white European American targets, and insofar as social agents in general are negatively affected by being targeted in these ways (these are, after all, presumably the means by which nonwhite African Americans have been negatively affected), it stands to reason that racial slurs applied to white European Americans are fully capable of affecting their life chances.

Norton and Sommers (2011) further suggest, in disagreement with (C7), that there is an “emerging belief [that] reflects Whites’ view of racism as a zero-sum game, such that decreases in perceived bias against Blacks over the past six decades are associated with increases in perceived bias against Whites” (p. 215), that “Whites may fear that minorities’ imposition of their cultural values represent an attack on White cultural values and norms” (p. 217), that “affirmative action policies designed to increase minority representation may focus Whites’ attention on the impact of quota-like procedures [...] threatening their resources (Haley and Si-

danius 2006)” (p. 217), and that “these changes in Whites’ conceptions of racism are extreme enough that Whites have now come to view anti-White bias as a bigger societal problem than anti-Black bias” (p. 215). Further, Storrs (1999) also points out how the mixed-race women in her empirical study often “construct whiteness as normative, empty, and bland but also as oppressive, prejudicial, and discriminatory” and accordingly “reject assimilation into whiteness in part because whiteness is stigmatized” (p. 194). Finally, Cutler (2007) has further argued that because of the “powerful discourse within hip-hop that privileges the Black body and the Black urban street experience [...] that in this context interculturality plays a functional role in ratifying an alternative social reality in which Blackness is normative and Whiteness is marked” (pp. 10–11). This context, Cutler (2007) explains, is one in which a “critique [of] White hegemonic culture” takes place so that whites are often targeted as “*wannabes* and dilettantes who think they can cross racial boundaries and participate in another cultural domain” (p. 16).

Given the popularity and influence of hip-hop culture among people today, and given the importance people place on being socially well regarded by others, it stands to reason that a white person being publicly called out as a *nerd* or *cracker* could as a result have their life chances negatively affected (e.g., they may lose “social capital” or respect among peers or now seem less appealing to potential mates; for further discussion on how slurs can be strategically used among speakers as a means for the negotiation of social capital, cf. Croom 2013a, pp. 184–186). Indeed, Rydell et al. (2010) conducted three empirical studies to test how people could be negatively affected by negative stereotypes and argued that their “research shows that stereotype threat harms more than just the execution of skills in the stereotyped domain by demonstrating that stereotype threat [also] reduces learning” (p. 894). More specifically, Rydell et al. (2010) argued that stereotyped targets could have their life chances negatively affected since negative stereotype threats can “trigger” or influence (a) “worries about confirming the stereotype” (cf. Marx and Stapel 2006), (b) “increased arousal” (cf. Murphy et al. 2007), (c) “reduced working memory” (cf. Schmader et al. 2008), (d) a “decrease [in] motivation to learn” (cf. Steele 1997), and (e) a reduction in the “encoding of novel information that is necessary for skill execution” (p. 894). Accordingly, insofar as through the application of a slur towards a target, an associated negative stereotype can threaten that target by (a) increasing how much they are worrying, (c) reducing their working memory, (d) decreasing their motivation to learn, or (e) degrading their ability to encode novel information necessary for skillful action, and insofar as (a)–(e) can negatively affect one’s life chances, then it follows that the application of a slur towards a target can resultantly affect their life chances also, regardless of whether that target is a white European American or a nonwhite African American. Evidence of this kind, that shows that slurs applied to white European Americans (along with nonwhite African Americans) can affect their life chances, therefore suggests that Embrick and Henricks (2013) are incorrect in arguing for (C7).

Finally, consider claim 8 (C8) by Embrick and Henricks (2013), which holds that the power to apply and deny slurs is held by white European Americans whereas the power to apply and deny slurs is not held by nonwhite African Americans (p. 198).

I argue that they are incorrect in arguing for (C8) since there are studies that support the claim that the power to apply and deny slurs is not held exclusively by white European Americans. Croom (2013a), for example, discusses the use of the racial slur *nigger* and draws upon empirical data to explain that within the context of certain in-group speakers the slur can often be used as a *norm reversed variant* of the original paradigmatic derogatory use and can thus be understood between in-group speakers as nonderogatory (pp. 190–194; cf. Sweetland 2002). Indeed, Croom (2013a) has suggested that several markers can aid in the interpretation of slurs as being used nonderogatorily rather than derogatorily, including for instance, sameness of target features (e.g., members of the same racial in-group using the relevant racial slur between each other, members of the same sexual in-group using the relevant sexist slur between each other, etc.) as well as sameness of communicative medium and style (e.g., members both communicate in the same language and speech style, such as AAVE, etc.). So, for example, speakers may strategically employ linguistic features characteristic of their in-group to strategically signal their in-group status, and Croom (2013a) offers the following example of how this works:

*Nigger* + *r*-less-ness feature of AAVE = *Nigga*  
 Relatively more derogatory → relatively less derogatory (p. 193)

Now, with this point in mind, consider once again the example offered by Croom (2011, 2013a) suggesting that the term *nigger* (identified as **N** below) can be usefully understood as a *family resemblance (rather than classical) category* that consists in a constellation of *stereotypical properties* (identified as **P** below) such as the following:

N	( <i>Nigger</i> )
P1	<i>x is African American</i> (Fredrickson 1971, p. 41; Asim 2007, p. 12)
P2	<i>x is prone to laziness</i> (Asim 2007, p. 27)
P3	<i>x is subservient</i> (Fredrickson 1971, p. 41; Asim 2007, p. 12)
P4	<i>x is commonly the recipient of poor treatment</i> (Fredrickson 1971, p. 41; Asim 2007, p. 12)
P5	<i>x is athletic and musical</i> (Alim et al. 2010, p. 128)
P6	<i>x is sexually liberal or licentious</i> (Asim 2007, p. 27)
P7	<i>x is simple-minded</i> (Asim 2007, p. 27)
P8	<i>x is emotionally shallow</i> (Asim 2007, p. 27)
P9	<i>x is a survivor, tough, or prone to violence</i> (Anderson 1999, p. 50; Rahman 2012)
P10	<i>x is loud and excessively noisy</i> (Anderson 1999, p. 50)

So if, for instance, an in-group speaker is intending to communicate that they are sufficiently similar to some hearer insofar as they both possess properties (P1), (P4), and possibly others (such as (P5) and (P6), or (P9)), and if these interlocutors know each other well enough or have established enough common ground to understand that the speaker does not dislike the target and does not intend to communicate that the target possesses most of the other (typically negative) properties belonging to **N**, then an in-group speaker might strategically choose to employ **N** as the category that most ef-

ficiently and economically predicates the intended (shared) properties of their target such as, e.g., (P1) *African American*, (P4) *commonly the recipient of poor treatment*, and possibly others (such as (P5) *athletic and musical*, (P6) *sexually liberal*, or (P9) *a survivor*), at least to the extent that **N** is better for this than other categories available in the speaker's lexicon (Croom 2013a, p. 199; Croom 2011, p. 356).

In line with this observation, Bucholtz (2011a) has likewise suggested that “The term [*nigga*] is generally used by [...] some African Americans, especially men, as a neutral or even affiliative term of address and reference” (p. 260), so in disagreement with (C8), recent works by scholars such as Bucholtz (2001, 2011a, b), Croom (2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013a, 2014a, b, c, d), Cutler (2007), and Sweetland (2002) support an earlier point made by Kennedy (2002) in *Nigger: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word* that racial slurs like *nigger* are not necessarily considered as negative or derogatory racial insults, particularly when they are used within certain *in-group contexts* (e.g., when a racial slur towards African Americans is used among fellow African Americans, or when a racial slur towards European Americans is used among fellow European Americans).<sup>12</sup> Kennedy (2002) has previously pointed out, for example, that many African Americans do in fact continue to exchange racial slurs nonoffensively, “openly and frequently in conversations with one another” (p. 37; cf. Spears 1998), and Talib Kweli has previously explained from his perspective that “Our community has been using the word [*nigger*] and trying to redefine the context of it for a long time” and “the fact of the matter is that there’s a large segment of black people who grew up hearing the word intended as nothing but love” (quoted in Echegoyen 2006). Henry Louis Gates, Jr., director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African American Research at Harvard University, has similarly acknowledged that racial slurs like *nigger* are not necessarily considered as negative or derogatory racial insults, particularly when they are used within certain *in-group contexts* (Gates 2009), and in “Lions’ Scheffler, Delmas Use Racial Slurs As Terms of Endearment,” Wilson (2013) discussed the longtime friendship of fellow Lions teammates Tony Scheffler and Louis Delmas and explained that between the two of them “racial slurs are considered a term of endearment” (cf. Foster 2013; Smith 2013). Def Jam Records founder Russell Simmons further explains from his perspective on popular culture that:

When we say “nigger” now, it’s very positive. Now all white kids who buy into hip-hop culture call each other “nigger” because they have no history with the word other than something positive [...] When black kids call each other “a real nigger” or “my nigger,” it means you walk a certain way [...] have your own culture that you invent so you don’t have to buy into the US culture that you’re not really a part of. It means we’re special. We have our own language. (quoted in Jackson 2005)

Granted, Embrick and Henricks (2013) do briefly acknowledge how scholars like Kennedy (2002) have argued that every use of a racial slur like *nigger* “need not be” considered as a “racial insult” (p. 201), but Embrick and Henricks (2013) then immediately proceed to brush aside without further consideration the possibility that it might instead be used as a “term of affection or endearment by black people among

<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that the criteria for inclusion as an in-group member are not *absolutely strict* (cf. Sweetland 2002; Croom 2013a, pp. 196–199; Croom 2011, pp. 355–357).

black people” on the grounds that “*whites* rarely use it this way” (p. 201, my emphasis) and that it “is inseparable from a history of white-on-black oppression in which whites enslaved, lynched, and murdered millions of blacks” (pp. 201–202). But by forgoing more current consideration of the nonderogatory in-group use of the slur *nigger* simply because “*whites* rarely use it this way” (p. 201, my emphasis), Embrick and Henricks (2013) have become guilty of what Bucholtz (2001) identifies as a “common scholarly misperception that the unmarked status of whiteness is impervious to history, culture, or other local conditions,” and that, “in viewing whiteness as a normative, hegemonic, and unmarked racial position, scholars may be unwittingly reifying a singular and static version of whiteness” (p. 84). By forgoing consideration of the nonderogatory in-group use of slurs, Embrick and Henricks (2013) have also thereby failed to appreciate another point previously made by Denzin (2001) when he highlights the fact that “The meanings of any given racial terms can change, as when ‘black’ became a signifier of pride as a result of the Black Power movement of the 1960s” (p. 246; cf. Fitzmaurice 2010; Heffernan 2005; Miron and Inda 2000).

In other words, the meanings of our linguistic expressions are not rigidly fixated on points of the past and thus impervious to semantic change and pragmatic enrichment, but rather the meanings of our linguistic expressions are open to semantic evolution and renegotiation (as well as plenty of room for pragmatic play), as speakers continue to make strategic use and sense of these expressions in the communicative exchanges of their social life. So, even if we grant for the sake of argument that it is historically true, for instance, that the racial slur *nigger* “is inseparable from a history of white-on-black oppression” (Embrick and Henricks 2013, p. 201), it is also true that the racial slur *nigger* is *now also* inseparable from a history of black-on-black nonoppression by virtue of their widespread and conventional nonderogatory in-group use (Echegoyen 2006; Jackson 2005). Further, not only is the slur applied differently now and so updated and adjusted in its significance, but speakers also inevitably forget the past (horrible as it truly is), age, and pass away, and are replaced by new speakers, linguistic practices, and norms of expression. Research conducted by Associated Press-MTV involving 1355 participants, for instance, showed that 54% of respondents “think it’s OK to use them [slurs] within their own circle of friends” and that in such contexts the slur is considered nonoffensive (Cass and Agiesta 2011; Greene 2011). Rahman (2012) also had one of the participants from her study explain that, “You see, the people who say they’re offended are the older adults. Young kids don’t understand what the big deal is about the word. They know it’s about black people and slavery, but they’re like ‘that’s over’” (p. 161). Additionally, Bartlett et al. (2014) analyzed the language use of social media users from a dataset of collected tweets involving slur expressions ( $n=126,975$ ) and focused on investigating (1) the way that slurs are used on Twitter and (2) the volume of slur use on Twitter (pp. 5–6); in disagreement with claim 8 (C8), evidence from this study suggests that “Slurs are used in a very wide variety of ways—both offensive and non-offensive,” that “There were very few cases that presented an imminent threat of violence, or where individuals directly or indirectly incited offline violent action,” and that “Slurs are most commonly used [on Twitter] in a non-offensive, non-abusive manner: to express in-group solidarity or non-derogatory description” (pp. 6–7).

Furthermore, Galinsky et al. (2013) conducted ten empirical studies on (re)appropriation to test its potential effects on speakers and listeners empirically and found that self-labeling with slurs can actually *weaken* their stigmatizing force (p. 2020; cf. Galinsky et al. 2003). More specifically, Galinsky and colleagues (2013) found the following results from their experiments 1 through 10 (E1)–(E10) which are relevant for us to consider here: (E1) showed that “participants in the high-power condition [...] were more likely to label themselves with the derogatory term [such as *nigger*, *honky*, *gook*, *chink*, *bitch*, or *slut*] than were participants in the low-power condition” (p. 2022), (E2) showed that “participants in the group-power condition were more willing to label themselves with a derogatory group label [...] compared with participants in the individual-power condition” (pp. 2022–2023), (E3) showed that “participants in the self-label condition recalled feeling more powerful [...] than did those in the other-label condition” (p. 2023), (E4) showed that “self-labeling led observers to view the labeled person as more powerful” (p. 2024), (E5) showed that “a stigmatized minority, was seen as more powerful in the self-labeling condition [...] than in the other-label condition” (p. 2024), (E6) showed that “self-labeling increased perceptions of the stigmatized group’s power” (p. 2024), (E7) showed that “self-labeled participants viewed their own power as equivalent to the out-group member’s power,” or in other words, that “self-labeling equalized the perceived power difference between the stigmatized self-labelers and the out-group individuals in the minds of the self-labelers” (p. 2025–2026), (E8) showed that “self-labeling increased perceptions of the stigmatized group’s power over the label, which attenuated the negativity of the label” (p. 2026), (E9) showed that “self-labeling improved the evaluation of a derogatory label relative to other-labeling” (p. 2027), and (E10) showed that “both men and women saw the stigmatizing label *bitch* as less negative and supported female empowerment more after witnessing a woman label herself with this term than after witnessing another person label her with it (or after no labeling)” (p. 2027). Evidence of this kind shows that the power to apply and deny slurs is not held exclusively by whites, and therefore suggests that Embrick and Henricks (2013) are incorrect in arguing for (C8).

Although the study carried out by Embrick and Henricks (2013) on the use of slurs and stereotypes in the workplace offers an original contribution to the extant literature and has several genuine merits, here I have demonstrated that they incorrectly argue for (C1), (C2), (C4), (C5), (C7), and (C8), and that as a result their context-insensitive account of racial slurs and stereotypes remains severely inadequate. Arguably, Embrick and Henricks (2013) fail to provide an adequate account of racial slurs and stereotypes not because of a mistake with their *empirical data*, but rather because of a mistake with the *conceptual inferences* or conclusions that they draw from their data; that is to say, they have clearly drawn overgeneralized conclusions about racial slurs and stereotypes from their data that extend beyond what their data legitimately warrant. Namely, Embrick and Henricks (2013) end up forming overly extreme and biased conclusions about the use of racial slurs and stereotypes, because the population of speakers that they studied and drew their conclusions about was *itself racially biased*. Importantly, the racial demographics of the staff at the company Embrick and Henricks (2013) investigated in the southwestern USA “was mostly white (50% White, 25% Black, 20% Latina/o, 5% Asian)” (p. 200, my emphasis).



The fact that most of the participants that Embrick and Henricks (2013) studied were white has important implications for the extent to which *general* conclusions about slurs can be drawn. Croom (2013a) for one has pointed out that “it is less likely than otherwise that derogation would occur in conditions where the [relevant] properties of the speaker and target are sufficiently similar [e.g., interlocutors of the same race are less likely to derogate each other on the basis of race], and less likely than otherwise that in-group signification would occur in conditions where the [relevant] properties of the speaker and target are sufficiently different [e.g., interlocutors not of the same race are less likely to signify in-group status on the basis of race]” (p. 199). So, given the fact that there are a variety of different slurs that target members of different groups (e.g., *cracker* primarily targets white European Americans whereas *nigger* primarily targets nonwhite African Americans), and given the fact that the uses of racial slurs between speakers of the same race differ in their expressed offensiveness than the use of racial slurs between speakers of different races (e.g., the use of *cracker* between white European Americans is relatively less offensive or nonoffensive compared to the use of *cracker* by a nonwhite African American towards a European American, and the use of *nigger* between nonwhite African Americans is relatively less offensive or nonoffensive compared to the use of *nigger* by a white European American towards a nonwhite African American), it is clear that before Embrick and Henricks (2013) can legitimately draw *general* conclusions about the use of racial slurs and stereotypes, they must *not only* consider “the paradigmatic derogatory use of slurs” (Croom 2013a, p. 188) by “mostly white” *out-group* speakers towards nonwhite minorities *but also further* consider “the non-derogatory in-group use of slurs” (Croom 2013a, p. 190) among *in-group* speakers of the same race (e.g., the use of *cracker* among fellow white European Americans and the use of *nigger* among fellow nonwhite African Americans, etc.). Given the fact that Embrick and Henricks (2013) only investigated the derogatory out-group use of slurs and stereotypes by predominantly white European American speakers towards nonwhite minorities and did not investigate the nonderogatory in-group use of slurs and stereotypes among nonwhite minorities themselves (cf. Brontsema 2004; Croom 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013a, 2014a, b), it is not surprising that they mistakenly came to the *overly broad* conclusion that *all* slurs *always* function to perpetuate white supremacy, racial antagonism, and racial inequality (p. 197). Croom (2014a) has similarly criticized Hedger (2013) along with other philosophers of language and linguists (Potts 2003, 2005, 2007; Potts and Kawahara 2004; Potts et al. 2009; Pullum and Rawlins 2007; Kaplan 1999; Kratzer 1999) for also illegitimately drawing overly broad conclusions about the semantics and pragmatics of slur expressions (i.e., that all slurs always function to express offense) from biased or limited empirical data. An important aim of this chapter is to therefore motivate future work on slurs and stereotypes to proceed with more care with respect to this point.

There are at least two further reasons to be concerned with Embrick and Henricks (2013) context-insensitive account of racial slurs and stereotypes. First, recall that their focus on how predominantly white European American speakers use racial slurs and stereotypes towards nonwhite minorities resulted in Embrick and Henricks (2013) arguing that racial slurs and stereotypes function as symbolic resources

that exclude *nonwhite minorities but not whites* from opportunities and resources (p. 197–202). But what is potentially problematic about this account is that it seems to dangerously suggest that *it is not possible for white European American targets to be negatively affected by racial slurs and stereotypes directed towards them* and that as a result *white European Americans should never genuinely be considered the victims of racial discrimination and derogation*. But a suggestion like this remains unsupported by the empirical evidence and incorrectly suggests that *white European Americans are free from racial victimization*. Given the robust evidence reviewed in the present chapter, suggesting that white European Americans are not free from racial victimization in *all* contexts, one reason to be concerned with Embrick and Henricks' (2013) account of racial slurs and stereotypes is that it could unwittingly work to *exclude white European Americans but not nonwhite minorities* from opportunities and resources for their protection from racial discrimination.

Second, recall that their focus on how predominantly white European American speakers use racial slurs and stereotypes towards nonwhite minorities resulted in Embrick and Henricks (2013) arguing that *racial slurs are necessarily negative or derogatory irrespective of their particular context of use* (pp. 197–202). But what is potentially problematic about this account is that it seems to dangerously suggest that *it is not possible for in-group speakers to exchange racial slurs non-offensively* and that as a result *every use of a racial slur should be considered as a genuine form of racial discrimination and derogation*. But a suggestion like this remains unsupported by the empirical evidence and incorrectly suggests that *robust populations of in-group speakers are naïvely wrong to think that they have been exchanging racial slurs nonoffensively with each other, even among friends or in nonconfrontational in-group contexts*. Such a suggestion also incorrectly suggests that *the (re)appropriative use of racial slurs cannot weaken their stigmatizing force*, but this conflicts with empirical evidence to the contrary recently provided in ten empirical studies (E1)–(E10) by Galinsky and colleagues (2013) that has been reviewed in this. Based on the robust evidence we have discussed here, suggesting that in-group speakers can exchange racial slurs nonoffensively, another reason to be concerned with the account of racial slurs and stereotypes proposed by Embrick and Henricks (2013) is that it could be taken to condescendingly suggest that even in-group minority speakers explicitly claiming to use slurs nonderogatorily must in fact be using those slurs derogatorily, contrary to their “incorrect” self-reports, and that for some as-of-yet unexplained reason only out-group white majority speakers can *really* understand language and influence its content, meaning, or use. But there is no reason to suppose that the explicit reports of in-group nonwhite minority speakers are any less credible than those of white majority speakers, or that only white majority speakers can influence the significance or meaning potential of language. Here I hope to have provided clear reasons as well as substantive empirical evidence to reconsider the meaning potential of language as more fluid and open to negotiation and (re)appropriation than many scholars, including Embrick and Henricks (2013), have often supposed.

## 5 Conclusion

In “Discursive Colorlines at Work: How Epithets and Stereotypes are Racially Unequal,” Embrick and Henricks (2013) recently argued that racial slurs and stereotypes function as symbolic resources that *exclude nonwhite or non-European American minorities but not whites or European Americans* from opportunities or resources, and so are *necessarily negative or derogatory irrespective of the particular context of their use* (pp. 197–202). They accordingly advocate an account of racial slurs and stereotypes that is consonant with the *context-insensitive* accounts of Fitten (1993) and Hedger (2013), yet dissonant with the *context-sensitive* accounts of Kennedy (2002) and Croom (2011). The purpose of this chapter was to first briefly explicate the context-insensitive and context-sensitive accounts of racial slurs and stereotypes, consider reasons for why issues concerning the semantics and pragmatics of slurs have often appealed to stereotypes and stereotypical features, and then critically evaluate the main claims that Embrick and Henricks (2013) recently proposed in support of their context-insensitive account by drawing upon empirical evidence on (in-group and out-group uses of) racial slurs and stereotypes (for European Americans and African Americans) from recent research in linguistics, sociology, and psychology. In so doing, this chapter contributes to the literature on slurs and stereotypes by showing that (1) stereotypes for white European Americans and nonwhite African Americans need not be exclusively positive or exclusively negative but rather can contain a mixture of both positive and negative attributes, (2) stereotypes for both white European Americans and nonwhite African Americans are pluralistic rather than monolithic, (3) stereotypes for white European Americans and nonwhite African Americans do not contain the same attributes, (4) stereotypes can be applied and denied by both white European Americans and nonwhite African Americans, (5) slurs applied to both white European Americans and nonwhite African Americans can be restricted in that they apply to some (but not all) of its prototypical members, (6) slurs applied to white European Americans and nonwhite African Americans do not have the same meaning, (7) slurs applied to both white European Americans and nonwhite African Americans can affect their life chances, and (8) slurs can be applied and denied by both white European Americans and nonwhite African Americans. Finally, the aforementioned points (1), (2), (4), (5), and (8) suggest that a fully adequate account of slurs and stereotypes will be context-sensitive rather than context-insensitive.

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**Part V**  
**Cultural Perspectives**

# A Critical Look at the Description of Speech Acts

Jock Wong

**Abstract** John Searle says that the aim of studying the philosophy of language, which the area of speech acts originally fell under, concerns universality: “The philosophy of language is the attempt to give philosophically illuminating descriptions of certain general features of language (...) and it is concerned only incidentally with particular elements in a particular language” (1969, p. 4). The aim is, of course, a good one. However, to understand the “general features of language,” it follows that one would have to use a metalanguage that contains general features of language; a metalanguage that contains “particular elements” associated with “a particular language” or, in other words, an ethnocentric metalanguage would obviously not do. Yet, this is precisely how the study of speech acts is often conducted—with an ethnocentric metalanguage. It seems paradoxical that while scholars who study speech acts directly or indirectly engage in the pursuit of language universals, the metalanguage they use often effectively prevents them from reaching that goal. This chapter argues that we need to employ a minimally ethnocentric metalanguage, such as natural semantic metalanguage (NSM), as the analytic tool, if we want to fruitfully study speech acts in world languages. NSM could help us recognize speech acts from any language, even if there is no English word for it, and allow us to understand them from the inside. This chapter also argues that we should refrain from “comparing” speech acts by asking how people in various cultures perform the same speech act because this would necessitate the use of a language-specific speech act verb (e.g., *request*, *apologize*). A more fruitful way might be to formulate a generic situation using NSM and ask how people in various cultures respond in/to that situation.

**Keywords** Pragmatics and culture · Speech acts · NSM

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## 1 Introductory Remarks

This chapter takes a critical look at how speech acts are usually described and focuses specifically on the metalanguage. To begin, I would like to contextualize this study by taking a quick look at what philosophy of language is about, since the study of speech acts has its roots in this area, and how scholars generally approach the description of speech acts. In his groundbreaking publication *Speech Acts: an Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, Searle clearly states, “The philosophy of language is the attempt to give philosophically illuminating descriptions of certain *general* features of language, such as reference, truth, meaning and necessity; and it is concerned *only incidentally* with *particular* elements in a *particular* language” (1969, p. 4, emphasis added). Similarly, according to Baghramian, (1999, p. xxix), philosophy of language “is an attempt to understand the nature of language and its relationship with speakers, their thoughts, and the world.” The same writer adds, philosophers of language “are also concerned with questions about the relationship between language and the world...” It may thus be said that philosophy of language is ultimately about the search for language universals. This interest in language universals is not recent. Several centuries ago, René Descartes, who is considered by some to be the founding father of modern philosophy, believed in “the existence of a universal language underpinning the diverse languages which human communities use” (Baghramian 1999, p. xxx).

Although, like other philosophers of language, Searle is interested in language universals, he is particularly well known for his work in the theory of speech acts and, in particular, universals of language use. His 1969 publication has had an enormous impact on, and has, in a way, become the cornerstone of, contemporary studies of speech acts. Searle’s quest for universals of language use continues in a later publication *Expression and Meaning* (Searle 1979). Here, he expresses interest in finding out how many “kinds of illocutionary acts” there are (1979, p. 1), or, in other words, “how many ways of using language” there are (1979, p. vii).

Obviously, Searle is not the only influential figure in the study of universals of use. Two other prominent examples are Grice, who is well known for his *cooperative principle* (1975), and Brown and Levinson, renowned for their *politeness theory* (1987). Grice’s study is an “inquiry into the general conditions that...apply to conversation as such, irrespective of its subject matter” (1975, p. 43), while Brown and Levinson’s study aims to “identify some principles of a universal yet ‘social’ sort” (1987, p. 56). Brown and Levinson also make their interest very explicit in the title of their influential publication *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (1987). These studies have shaped our understanding of language use and influenced the works of many contemporary scholars.

Shortly after Searle’s first publication on speech acts, the interest in the universals of language use was shared by linguistics, especially sociolinguistics and pragmatics. Blum-Kulka and Olshain (1984; cf. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989), for example, in their report on a project “concerned with a cross-cultural investigation of speech act realization patterns” (the “Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project” or CCSARP), which focuses on “requests” and “apologies,” state a similar aim for

their field of study: “One of the basic challenges for research in pragmatics is the issue of *universality*” (1984, p. 196). However, unlike philosophers of language in the past, linguists seem to be interested in something more; they are also interested in finding out the extent to which it is “possible to determine the degree to which the rules that govern the use of language in context vary from culture to culture and from language to language” (1984, p. 196).

Another difference between traditional philosophers of language and more contemporary linguists/scholars, in their studies of speech acts, lies in their approaches. As is obvious in the earlier works of Grice and Searle, the approach associated with traditional philosophers tends to look for universals of use, either exclusively or mainly in the language that they speak, which is usually English. For example, Grice’s (1975) “cooperative principle” seems to have been formulated entirely on the basis of examples from English, as is Searle’s (1979) taxonomy of illocutionary acts.

Scholars using more contemporary methodologies, on the other hand, appear to approach the subject more cautiously by examining a variety of languages. Brown and Levinson, for example, claim that their initial study on politeness principles (1987, p. 59) is based on data that “consist in first-hand tape-recorded usage for three languages”: English, Tzeltal, and Tamil. Even if their politeness principles look suspiciously Anglocentric (Wong 2010), my point is that they seem to realize the importance of surveying a variety of languages. Another example comes from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), whose study describes a number of languages in terms of similarities and differences in use: Australian, American, British English, Canadian French, Danish, German, and Hebrew. Taking a “multilingual” approach seems to be a more commonsensical way of studying language universals and differences; it is only by examining a variety of languages that we can begin to discover what they have in common and how they differ.

However, scrutinizing a variety of languages does not naturally lead us much closer to the understanding of universals of language use. Studies such as Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) can still be problematic. In many instances, the problem or “pitfall,” as Goddard (2011, p. 32) might put it, has to do with the metalanguage. Linguists, as well as philosophers of language, seem to rely almost exclusively on English as their analytic tool—not plain and simple English, but a complex variety of English, usually Standard English, that comprises words and structures that do not have semantic counterparts in other languages. Instead of using language universals to describe language universals of use and language-specific pragmatic features of another language, they use a specific language (usually English) with all its particularities and peculiarities. This seems counterintuitive. Ironically, some of the studies that do precisely this are met with very positive reviews. For example, even though the authors use language-specific terms like *request* and *apology* as analytic tools, reviewer Holmes compliments Blum-Kulka et al.’s (1989) CCSARP, saying that “the volume demonstrates [its] method can provide valuable information and rich insights concerning the interaction of language, culture, and society in the area of speech act usage” (Holmes 1991, p. 125). Houck describes the same project as making “a significant contribution to defining the field of cross-cultural

pragmatics” and being “clearly in the forefront of cross-cultural speech act research” (1992, p. 218). I hasten to add that I am not implying that such studies have no value—far from it, as we can learn, and have learned much from them. Rather, there appears to be very little awareness of the problems associated with the use of language-specific categories of one language to describe language universals and language-specific categories of another language or, in short, problems associated with ethnocentrism (Wierzbicka 2013; Wong 2013). In fact, according to Goddard, this problem, which has to do with a “disregard for the descriptive metalanguage employed” is the “most serious problem” afflicting Searle’s approach to the study of speech acts (2011, p. 137).

In this chapter, I would like to raise ethnocentrism as an issue in the study of speech acts, and highlight problems related to it. I further argue that, to identify universals of language use and to describe language use in another language, we would first need to identify words and structures that are expected to be common to all languages and then use these common, language-independent components from any language as our analytic tool. As some studies have suggested (e.g., Goddard and Wierzbicka 1994, 2002), language-independent components can constitute a kind of culture-independent language that may be found in every language. Some scholars call this metalanguage a *natural semantic language* (NSM). The search for such metalinguistic universals, to which I will return, started in the early 1970s (e.g., Wierzbicka 1972) and has been ongoing since. Interestingly, as we shall see, the use of language universals to describe speech acts further highlights inherent problems in Searle’s categories. In addition, it may also tell us what speech acts are basically about. Ultimately, I would like to present NSM as a useful methodology to help us understand what speech acts are all about and hopefully generate further discussion in this area.

## 2 Pitfalls of Speech Act Studies

A number of studies in various linguistic subdisciplines (e.g., sociolinguistics, pragmatics, anthropological linguistics, and second language learning) have provided evidence to show that languages are not just different but are intrinsically tied to the cultures in which they are spoken (e.g. Smith 1983[1981]; Wierzbicka 1991; Goddard 2006; Wardhaugh 2006; Agar 2007). The link between language and culture seems to be recognized by many scholars and is nicely articulated by Agar: “Culture is in language, and language is loaded with culture” (2007, p. 23).

However, despite this awareness, a number of scholars, including those who have expressed awareness of this relationship, continue to use English to identify language universals of use and to understand other cultures, as if English words and grammar constitute a language-independent and culture-free medium of expression. As a number of studies have shown, English, like all other natural languages, has language-specific features and is not culturally neutral; it is heavily laden with

cultural values (Wierzbicka 1991, 1997, 2006a, 2010). When we use complex English to describe speech acts used in other languages and cultures, we impose an English perspective onto the object of study. We interpret or misinterpret other languages and cultures from the perspective of English. We become “imprisoned” in English (Wierzbicka 2013).

There are specific consequences when language-specific categories are relied on as a sufficient analytic tool. Firstly, looking within English, while some speech acts are lexicalized (e.g., *request*, *apology*), some others are not, and it seems that the former group gets far more attention than the latter group. Speech acts in the latter group either escape academic scrutiny or have their visibility reduced under a broad umbrella term. Secondly, when we look beyond English, another problem becomes more obvious. The fact is that most words in a language have no semantic counterparts in other languages (Wierzbicka 1997), and speech acts in other languages which do not have semantic equivalents in English tend to attract less attention. If they do come under scholarly scrutiny, they are represented by English speech act verbs. This practice, in which ordinary English words are used in an unspecified technical sense, for sheer convenience, to refer to unrelated or distantly related speech acts (e.g., the use of the word *request* to refer to a directive or imperative), can be confusing and misleading, and is without doubt descriptively inadequate.

The metalinguistic pitfalls discussed here are not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, they represent what I perceive to be important obstacles in our understanding of speech acts in world languages, and I would like to draw attention to them.

## 2.1 *English Speech Acts with No Name*

In many studies of speech acts, focus is mainly given to speech acts that are realized by English verbs. Searle’s five categories of illocutionary acts—assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations (1979, pp. 12–19, 2007, p. 31)—seem to have been constructed on the basis of English speech act verbs. Giving examples of directives, Searle writes, “Verbs denoting members of this class are *ask*, *order*, *command*, *request*, *beg*, *plead*, *pray*, *entreat*, and also *invite*, *permit*, and *advise*” (1979, p. 14). To use another example, Searle says this about expressives: “The paradigms of expressive verbs are ‘thank,’ ‘congratulate,’ ‘apologize,’ ‘condole,’ ‘deplore,’ and ‘welcome’” (1979, p. 15). Towards the end of the section, he writes summarily, “In section IV, I tried to classify illocutionary acts and, in section V, I tried to explore some of the syntactical features of the verbs denoting member [sic] of each of the categories” (1979, p. 28). Thus, it appears that Searle’s interest is narrowly limited to English speech acts that have names. This is not unproblematic because it can unwittingly give readers the impression that every speech act has a name or that only speech acts that have names are worthy of scholarly attention.

Searle is not alone. Writing before Searle, Austin gave a similar impression. He wrote:

What we need besides the old doctrine about meanings is a new doctrine about all the possible forces of utterances, towards which our proposed list of performative verbs would be a very great help. (Austin 1961, p. 238; quoted in Kemp 2007, p. 106)

Implicit in such a claim is that studying speech act verbs is what the study of speech acts is mainly about. There is no overt expression of interest in unnamed speech acts.

To use yet another example, I would like to quote Alston: “Telling X that the door is open, requesting X to open the door, and asking X whether the door is open, all express the same proposition but with different illocutionary forces” (2007, p. 9). Here, Alston uses speech acts with names to demonstrate the idea that different speech act verbs express different illocutionary forces. Alston, like Searle, limits his discussion only to speech act verbs. As a consequence, our understanding of speech acts, in general, seems to be limited by how much we understand speech act verbs.

A final example comes from Vanderveken, who writes:

By uttering sentences in the contexts of use of natural languages, speakers attempt to perform illocutionary acts such as statements, questions, declarations, requests, promises, apologies, orders, offers, and refusals.... (1990, p. 7)

English and most other actual natural languages also have a large number of *performative verbs* like “promise”, “vow”, “inform”, “assure”, “predict”, “urge”, “require”, “resign”, “thank”, and “apologize” which name possible illocutionary forces of utterances. (1990, p. 17, original emphasis)

Again, we see special attention given to speech act verbs (see also Vanderveken’s Chap. 6, “Semantic analysis of English performative verbs” 1990, pp. 166–219), rather than speech acts. There is, of course, nothing wrong with studying speech act verbs but, in our attempts to understand human language and languages, this should not obscure the need to also identify speech acts that are realized by nonverbs.

In fact, nonverbal speech acts can also be culturally significant and worthy of study. An example is the English child-oriented act of saying “good boy/girl” to a child who has done something right. This speech act is usually employed by parents or parent-like figures when they want to imply that a child “has done something that the speaker has wanted him or her to do” (Wierzbicka 2004a, p. 253), presumably in an attempt to reinforce the action. Accordingly, the expressions *good boy* and *good girl* are “widely used in Anglo parental speech directed at children” (Wierzbicka 2004a, p. 251) and may therefore be considered an important English speech act. However, although this speech act has been discussed by anthropologists as a child-raising practice (e.g., Naomi Quinn, quoted in Wierzbicka 2004a), it does not seem to have gained much attention from linguists or, at least, not to the degree that speech acts like request and apology have.

It may, of course, be argued that this is, in fact, an act of praise. Wierzbicka, for example, correctly refers to it as a kind of “exaggerated praise” (2004a, p. 252). However, it is much more than a simple act of praise. Wierzbicka’s study shows us that it is an attempt to reinforce certain behaviors and instill certain values in children. Thus, unlike many ordinary or spontaneous acts of praise, this speech act has deep cultural connotations. Also, this speech act is language specific. In Chinese, for example, this speech act is not found; although in Chinese, there is 好孩子

(*hǎo háizi* in Mandarin; “good child”), this expression is mainly used to commend the child for something major they have done, with implications about the child’s maturity, and is in a sense a kind of positive moral statement about the child that cannot be equated with “good boy/girl.” Even within Europe, as Wierzbicka points out, “there are no comparable expressions (used in parental speech addressed to children) in other European languages” (2004a, p. 256). Furthermore, this English speech act is historically significant. Wierzbicka provides evidence to suggest that this child-oriented speech act may “have had its roots in England’s and America’s Puritan past” (2004a, p. 261). Although it has presumably lost its religious connotations, the speech act of saying “good boy/girl” is still associated with the upholding of certain cultural values among the community of Anglo, English speakers.

Another fairly important speech act with no name is the act performed by the words “I feel bad (now),” said by someone to an addressee they have somehow inconvenienced. According to two of my Australian consultants, it is associated with an apology. Indeed, in some situations, “I feel bad” is used with an apology, as this example provided by a consultant shows:

A client Y (after commuting for an hour) comes to the office of the company person X is working for to attend a meeting but the meeting was actually cancelled 2 weeks ago.

X: I am really sorry not to have informed you of the cancellation of the meeting.

Y (annoyed): Well, it’s OK. It’s a shame about the travelling. I might pop into Amsterdam now....

X: *I feel bad now*. I should have informed you but it had completely slipped my mind.

However, just because it is often used with an apology does not mean it is an apology. A British consultant agrees with me that it is “not really an apology,” saying:

Not really an apology but more a call for the other person to say “oh no don’t feel bad”. In an apology someone admits guilt but perhaps “I feel bad” is a plea to have the guilt removed because the person doesn’t feel they deserve it.

If “I feel bad” is not an admission of guilt or fault, the speech act should ideally not be confused with an apology. Another consultant describes it as an expression of “regret,” which sounds like a reasonable description. Whatever it may be, presumably because it has no name, it has not gained much attention from writers of speech acts.

It ought to be recognized that speech acts can be realized by linguistic features other than verbs, such as multiword phrases (Goddard 2011), particles, intonation (Wakefield 2011), and interjections. In fact, as Green points out in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, “One can perform a speech act such as issuing a warning without saying anything: A gesture or even a minatory facial expression will do the trick” (Green 2009). The functions of particles, in particular, have been the subject of scrutiny of a number of studies, and these studies clearly point to their role in the performance of speech acts, even though the term *speech act* is not used. For example, Gupta notes that Singaporean children “engage in persuasive activities and arguments with aplomb, exploiting the particle system to do this from the earliest age” (cf. 1992, 1994, p. 82). Another study has also suggested that



Singapore English particles can be used to tell people to do things and to question or negate things that the addressee has said (Wong 2004a). These are all clearly speech acts but, to the best of my knowledge, no one has studied such particles under the linguistic subfield of speech acts.

## **2.2 *Speech Acts from Non-English Cultures with No English Equivalents***

Non-English speech acts with no equivalents in English also tend to escape scholarly attention. An example may be found in the Chinese speech act verb “叫” (*jiào* in Mandarin, which can also mean “call [someone’s name]”). This speech act is very important in Chinese culture, including Chinese-Singapore culture, where most people speak Singapore English. Because this is an important speech act verb and it does not have a semantic equivalent in English, Singapore English speakers use the word *call* as a calque to mean *jiào* (Wong 2006a).

This speech act is usually used by children and it involves addressing an older person or saying aloud the older person’s address form, especially one from an older generation, when they meet as a kind of acknowledgment that the addressee is someone older. It expresses a kind of deference for someone higher up on a social hierarchy based on age and generation. As Pan puts it, Chinese are “very deferential to their superiors” (2000, p. 6). When a younger person meets an older person, the younger person is expected to say the address form used to address the older person (e.g., “uncle/aunty”) (Wakefield 2013; Wong 2006a, b) as an expression of deference. In response, the older person may do the same thing (i.e., say the younger person’s name), or they may simply acknowledge the act. After this exchange, normal conversation may ensue. No other form of greeting is necessary.

The importance of this speech act in Chinese culture is evidenced in the observation that the act is one of the first speech acts Chinese parents teach their older infants and toddlers, even when the children cannot speak beyond the two-word stage (Wong 2006a). In fact, this act is even more important than the acts of thanking and apologizing to other people. A Chinese mother whose children do not “叫” or “call” people and who does not prompt her children to do so is frowned upon by other members of the culture. However, presumably, because it does not have an English equivalent, this important Chinese speech act does not seem to enjoy much attention in the study of speech acts.

## **2.3 *Misuse of English Speech Act Verbs and Misunderstanding of Non-English Ones***

While some unnamed speech acts escape the attention of researchers, others suffer a different fate. They are assigned an “identity” or, rather, a “mis-identity” in the form of a speech act verb and described from the perspective of this “mis-identity.”

All too often, speech acts, including English speech acts, are given names that bear little or no relation to what their speakers use them for. A classic example comes from the Japanese word *sumimasen*, which literally means something like “it is not complete” (*sumu* “end” or “complete” and *masen* “not,” according to a Japanese consultant). It is often described as an apology, by both nonnative and native speakers of Japanese (e.g., Ide 1998).

However, there is ample evidence to suggest that *sumimasen* is not an apology. Firstly, the word can be used in situations in which English speakers say “thank you,” as reflected by part of the title of Ide’s 1998 paper: “Sorry for your kindness.” Secondly, as my Japanese consultant points out, the word may also be used in situations in which an English speaker might say, “excuse me,” as when one is trying to get the attention of another person. Thirdly, *sumimasen* is not an admission that the speaker has done something bad to the addressee, while an apology is an admission of fault or wrongdoing. Olshtain explains what an apology involves:

In the decision to carry out the verbal apology, the S (speaker) is willing to humiliate himself or herself to some extent and to *admit to fault* and responsibility. (1989, p. 156, emphasis added)

However, as Tanaka et al. point out, “an apology in Japanese does not necessarily mean that the person is acknowledging a fault” (2000, p. 76). In the first place, the speaker may not even have done something wrong. In Goddard’s words: “For a Japanese ‘apology’ to be called for, it is not necessary for the speaker to have done anything wrong” (2011, p. 155). If a Japanese speaker who uses the word *sumimasen* is not acknowledging a fault or has done nothing wrong, the act cannot be, strictly speaking, considered an apology. I thus agree with Wierzbicka in this respect: “It is misleading and confusing, therefore, to call it an apology in the first place” (1996a, p. 531).

The problem is that scholars writing in English have a tendency to analyze cultures from the perspective of English. Using the same example of *sumimasen* to further this discussion, consider Ide’s (1998, pp. 513–521) analysis. She describes seven functions of *sumimasen* on the basis of her data: “sincere apology,” “quasi-thanks and apology” (or “mixed feelings of regret and thankfulness”), “request marker,” “attention-getting device,” “leaving taking device,” “affirmative and confirmational response,” and “reciprocal exchange of acknowledgment.” Here, I focus on two of these functions: apology and thanks. From an English perspective, the Japanese *sumimasen* is used in situations in which English speakers apologize and in which English speakers say “thank you.” However, saying that a word can be used to apologize and to thank (or give “quasi-thanks”) someone is problematic, simply because these two English speech acts are distinct and mutually exclusive. This distinction reflects an English perspective, not a Japanese perspective. Commenting on how scholars tend to view the Japanese *sumimasen* from a “Western” perspective, Wierzbicka writes:

The Japanese rule that links reception of favors with the need to express bad feelings is puzzling to Westerners and... it is often described from a Western point of view as an incomprehensible blurring of the boundary between apologies and thanks. (1996a, p. 535)

However, if we look at the word from a native Japanese perspective, the disparate functions become irrelevant. As Ide herself mentions (quoting another scholar), *sumimasen* has a sense of “acknowledging indebtedness” (Ide 1998, p. 522) and this sense, in my view, can describe most of all the seven situations that she examines. Wierzbicka says something similar. She argues that the word *sumimasen* “reflects the speakers’ watchful attention to any trouble that they may have caused” and is used to tell an addressee that they “feel something bad” because they have imposed on the addressee (1996a, p. 535). I agree. Instead of saying that *sumimasen* can be used as an apology, which reflects an English perspective, it might be more accurate to say that the word is used to indicate that the speaker feels something bad. Instead of saying that the word can be used to thank someone, it might be more descriptive to say that the word is used to, again, tell the addressee that the speaker feels something bad, in this case, because of the perceived trouble imposed on the addressee. The proposed semantic component “I feel something bad” explains why *sumimasen* can be used in situations when English speakers say, “sorry,” “thank you,” “excuse me,” or, in other words, situations in which the speaker feels they have imposed on the addressee. The fact seems to be that Japanese speakers, when saying “*sumimasen*,” do not think they are apologizing to or thanking the addressee. They are simply saying something like, “I feel something bad,” a speech act for which there is no name in English.

A similar cultural norm may be found in the Chinese expression “不好意思” (*bùhǎo yìsi* in Mandarin). It literally means something like “(I feel) embarrassed,” but essentially it means something like “I feel something bad.” It is not an apology; it works like the Japanese *sumimasen* and can be used in situations in which English speakers apologize, thank someone, and say, “excuse me” to get someone’s attention. Arguably, this speech act is related to the traditional Chinese value of “self denigration” (Pan 2011, p. 15), which predisposes a Chinese person to denigrate himself, and does the opposite to the addressee in certain situations. If we look at *bùhǎo yìsi* from an English perspective, we will, of course, end up with a list of disparate speech functions, like Ide (1998) did for Japanese. However, when we look at it from a native, Chinese perspective, there can only be one act, which is to express a sense of indebtedness, something akin to “I feel something bad.”

It seems clear from our discussion of the Japanese *sumimasen* and the Chinese *bùhǎo yìsi* that “the concept of ‘apology’...is culture-bound and is therefore inappropriate as a descriptive and analytical tool in the cross-cultural field” (Wierzbicka 1996a, p. 530). Further evidence that supports this claim comes from Hindi. According to Kachru, “there are no exact translation equivalents in Hindi for ‘apology’, ‘apologize’, or ‘sorry’” (1995, p. 267). This implies that monolingual Hindi speakers do not necessarily think in terms of *apology* in situations where English speakers do. When one asks presumptuously how Hindi speakers apologize, one unwittingly imposes an English category onto Hindi culture, thereby making an inaccurate, culturally biased statement about Hindi or Hindi ways of thinking.

Even among non-English cultures that have words that match *apology*, it must not be assumed that the concept plays an important role in the everyday life of people the way it does in native English-speaking cultures; cultural rules can be different. In Cantonese culture, for example, which is my native culture, even if one

could easily formulate an apology, family members and close friends rarely apologize to each other for small matters. For example, my father has never apologized to me (or thanked me, for that matter; see below) in his entire life (cf., Wong 2007). This may come as a surprise to many native English speakers but it is unremarkable in Southern Chinese culture.

Like the rules of apologizing, the rules of thanking people are culture specific too. In some cultures, the act of thanking rarely takes place among family members and close friends. My Cantonese culture is one such culture. In fact, in some cultures, like Indian culture, people can be annoyed when family members and close friends thank them for small matters (Apte 1974). Gladkova shares her cross-cultural experience with us:

I was at a loss when he got annoyed when I thanked him for a dinner he invited me to. It turned out that in Indian culture friends and relatives do not thank each other. All I could have said is that the dinner was tasty—that is already a very high degree of appreciation. (Gladkova 2007, p. 146)

Obviously, it is not just non-English languages that can sometimes be misunderstood. Speech acts from nonnative varieties of English can also be misunderstood and given a wrong identity. For example, in her description of Singapore English particles, Gupta describes Singapore English directives using words like “commands” (1992, p. 37, 43) and “summonses” (1992, p. 48). Here are some of her examples of Singapore English directives, which she describes as *commands* and/or *summonses*:

Come (1992, p. 43)  
 You cannot go out.... (1992, p. 43)  
 ...you must help me find this (1992, p. 48).

Regarding the word *summons*, a British consultant writes (email, 2011), “For me *summons* is a very formal word—either you get one from the court or you are very important and call somebody into your presence—e.g. the Director summoned him to her office.” This suggests that the word *summons* does not adequately describe such Singaporean speech acts, used so routinely among family members and friends.

Perhaps from Gupta’s native English perspective (she is a native British English speaker), Singaporeans give commands and summonses every day, but such words do not represent the native insider’s perspective. They do not reflect how Singaporeans see such unremarkable everyday acts. As a native Singaporean, I would not describe such speech acts in this way and have never heard any Singaporean do so. It would arguably be a more accurate description to say that Singaporeans have a tendency to *tell* people to do things (rather than *ask*), but this is not what *commands* and *summonses* are about.

Whatever the cause, the misuse of speech act names is rather rampant in scholarly circles. My final example comes from Zhan (1992), who laxly uses the verb *apologize* as an umbrella term for a variety of ways Chinese speakers perform so-called face-threatening acts, such as admission of an “impingement,” giving “compelling reasons” for doing the face-threatening act, expressing “reluctance to show one is reluctant to ask a partner to do something,” and expressing “a hesitant attitude toward doing the face-threatening act” (1992, pp. 66–68). He also says things like “If

one did not do something involving the partner that one should have done, one can make an apology in an indirect way by explaining the reason why” (1992, p. 67). Suffice it to say that these attempts to placate someone cannot be, seriously speaking, considered apologies, simply because there is no overt admission of wrongdoing. In fact, when a person explains “the reason why” (without an overt apology), they may even be trying to justify what they have done and not apologizing.

## 2.4 Further Misunderstanding of Speech Act Verbs

In this section, I discuss related problems associated with contemporary approaches to speech acts and would like to use one of Searle’s categories of speech acts as the starting point. The category in question is directives and, according to Searle, they are “attempts...by the speaker to get the hearer to do something” (1979, p. 13). Members of this class include on the one hand, *command* and *order*; and on the other hand, *ask* and *request* (Searle 1979, p. 14). The first two examples, it would appear, represent the class of direct speech acts, while the other two are “indirect speech acts” (Searle 1979, p. 31). Searle raises a question: “How is it possible for the speaker to say one thing [e.g. “Can you reach the salt?”], mean what he says, but also to mean something else [i.e. “pass the salt?”]” (p. 173). This question seems to have stemmed from the observation that “in our [i.e., Searle’s] culture, whenever somebody asks you certain sorts of questions, they are usually trying to get you to do something” (1979, p. 176).

Searle attempts to answer his own question:

To be more specific, the apparatus necessary to explain the indirect part of indirect speech acts includes a theory of speech acts, certain general principles of cooperative conversation (some of which have been discussed by Grice (1975)), and mutually shared factual background information of the speaker and the hearer, together with an ability on the part of the hearer to make inferences. (1979, p. 32)

In a later chapter, he iterates his points:

The apparatus necessary for the hearer to make the inference includes a theory of speech acts, a theory of conversation, factual background information, and general powers of rationality and inference. (1979, p. 176)

Searle’s explanation sounds plausible, but perhaps only from an English perspective. It does not fully explain why people from non-English speaking cultures sometimes fail to understand an “indirect” speech act, as the following example shows:

Student: Hi Professor X.

Professor: Hi Noritaka. How are you? Why don’t you sit down?

Student: Because you did not tell me to.

Professor: OK, I am telling you now. (Kecskes 2008, p. 401)

According to Kecskes, “the student did not have enough prior experience with the expression ‘Why don’t you sit down?’ to develop a non-literal understanding of the pragmatic unit whose most salient meaning for most native speakers is its nonliteral rather than literal meaning” (2008, p. 401). This means that while some scholars

underline the importance of rationality or logic (e.g., Grice 1975; Searle 1979; Brown and Levinson 1987) in our understanding of speech acts, other scholars, like Kecskes (2008), might attribute such understanding to experience.

Linguistic evidence, however, suggests that our understanding of the so-called indirect English speech acts has little to do with experience and even less to do with rationality or logic. To understand them, we need to understand English or Anglo values. As has been argued elsewhere:

To interpret and appreciate the question, the student would need to understand that it is a manifestation of the value of respect for personal autonomy and therefore Anglo English speakers would normally prefer to ask people to do something rather than to tell others what to do. The student's response "because you did not tell me to" betrays the absence of this understanding. (Wong 2010, p. 2941)

A number of other studies have also reached the same conclusion that respect for one's autonomy is a core value of Anglo culture (e.g., Wierzbicka 1991, 2006b; Wong 2004b, 2005). In fact, English even has a device which can be used with an imperative to express covert respect for one's autonomy. The device is the word *please*. Vanderveken explains:

The meaning of the word "please" in an imperative sentence serves to indicate that the speaker gives an option of refusal to the hearer in making his attempt to get him to do something. Thus, literal utterances of such imperative sentences have the illocutionary force of a request which has a rather polite special mode of achievement of the directive illocutionary point. (1990, p. 16)

In many instances, what speech act a speaker uses in a particular situation and how a speech act is formulated have a lot to do with the value system of the speaker. It is not a matter of chance or rationality that native English speakers avoid the imperative and prefer a question form to get someone to do something, while the use of the imperative is a matter of routine in Chinese culture (Wong 2004b). By using the question form (e.g., "Would you do this?"), English speakers express, if superficially, respect for the addressee's personal autonomy or, more specifically, the right to say "no." On the other hand, by using the imperative, Chinese speakers signal their nonindividualistic orientation and an obligation to do things for one another.

Presumably, because of his a-cultural orientation, Searle mainly sees the similarities between speech acts like orders and commands on the one hand and requests on the other and groups them in the same category of directives. Similarly, he places "modest attempts" as when I invite you to do it or suggest that you do it" and "very fierce attempts as when I insist that you do it" in the category of directives (1979, p. 13). He also places "*suggesting that p*" and "*insisting that p*" in the same category "assertive" (1979, p. 13) because these verbs "commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something's being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition" (1979, p. 12).

Searle does not consider that, if we take culture into consideration, things can look rather different. As mentioned, studies have shown that one of the core values of Anglo culture is respect for other people's autonomy. This includes respect for an addressee's right to their opinions and to say "no." The idea is also not to impose one's will on another person. Linguistically, this value has a number of manifesta-

tions. When Anglo English speakers want someone to do something, they avoid the imperative and use a question form. They prefer to *ask* people to do things; they do not normally *tell* people to do things, as is the routine in many other cultures. When they want to share their ideas with their addressees, they try to not sound dogmatic, and present their ideas as suggestions (e.g., “I suggest we do X”; Wierzbicka 1991) and using question tags (“it is, isn’t it?”; Wierzbicka 1991; Wong 2008) and other linguistic devices. They try not to sound like they are forcing their ideas on their addressees, like people in some other cultures tend to do (Wong 2004a, b, 2005). This means that verbs like *ask*, *request*, *suggest*, and question tags could well be grouped into one category because they all express respect for the addressee’s autonomy and verbs like *command*, *order*, *tell*, *insist* (*I insist that it is like this*), *insist* (*I insist you do it*) into another because they express a dissimilar value.

An a-cultural approach to the study of speech acts could have been the cause of yet another metalinguistic problem. Not recognizing the cultural meanings embodied in some English names of speech acts, scholars misuse these words, potentially causing confusion. A classic example of misuse is found in the word *request*. Other than *apology*, the word *request* seems to have the highest instance of misuse by scholars of speech acts. I shall illustrate my point with a few examples, the first of which comes from Searle. Discussing presupposition, Searle writes:

If I say, “please leave the room,” and thus make a request, I seem to presuppose that you are at that time in the room. What is the status of that presupposition? Well, it seems natural to say something like the following: Unless the presupposition is *true*, there is something improper about the request. The request seems to require that the presupposition be true in order that the request can, so to speak, come into effect, that it can have any force. (2007, p. 35, underlining mine)

In this short excerpt, Searle refers to “please leave the room” as a request, four times at that. Although Vanderveken says that the word *please* has “the illocutionary force of a request” (1990, p. 16), a point well taken, I still hesitate to call “please + imperative” a request because it does not overtly acknowledge the right of the addressee to say “no”; an imperative is still present. A request explicitly recognizes the addressee’s right to say “no,” whereas an imperative does not or not overtly. A request is often represented by a question and may be described by the verb *ask* (Wierzbicka 1991). On the other hand, an imperative takes the form of “do this,” does not overtly invite a response from the addressee, and is more closely associated with the word *tell*. If someone said, “please leave the room” to me, I would report the incident as “they *told* me to leave the room” and not “they *asked* me to leave the room.” To quote an Australian consultant: “‘Please leave the room’ is telling someone, no doubt about it.”

Searle is not alone in misusing the names of some speech acts. There are other scholars who describe imperatives as requests. Tatton (2008, p. 1), for example, refers to the imperative “Close the window” as a request. Lee-Wong (2000, p. 4) similarly refers to the Chinese imperative “*qing ni ba chuanghu dakai*” (“Please open the window”) as a request. Gupta, in saying that the category of Singapore English directives includes “all requests for action, including summonses” (1992, p. 48), incorrectly associates summonses with requests.

## 2.5 *Anglocentrism*

Because Searle ignores culture, he perpetuates Anglocentrism and takes it “for granted that what seems to hold for the speakers of English must hold for ‘people generally’,” to use Wierzbicka’s words (1991, p. 25). In a recent article, which documents an interview of Searle by József Andor (which took place in 2010), Searle, who admits that “English is a language [he] knows best,” argues that “the interrogative formula is so extensively used in a great variety of languages” because it “gives the hearer the illusion that she is being presented with a choice” (Andor 2011, pp. 117, 122). Searle adds, “it is rude to give people an absolute force that there is no choice” (Andor 2011). Searle does not appear to know that the imperative formula is routinely used in “a great variety of languages”, e.g., Chinese and Polish, without being perceived as rude (Wierzbicka 1991; Wong 2004b; Wakefield 2013). Moreover, respect for personal autonomy, which may be manifested as “distance,” is associated with “hostility and alienation” in Polish culture (Wierzbicka 1991, p. 37).

An Anglocentric approach to the study of speech acts is puzzling. Two decades ago, it was already recognized by some that the value of “respect for the autonomy for the individual,” which is associated with the use of the interrogative formula, is culture specific (Wierzbicka 1991, p. 37). Today, 20 years later, scholars still talk about this value as if it is universal, as if people everywhere consider it rude not to give people a choice.

## 2.6 *Speech Act or Speech Act Verb*

I would now like to briefly discuss something which I have mentioned in passing: Some studies seem to focus more on speech act verbs and even sentence types (e.g., Vanderveken 1990), while others tend to focus on the ways a particular speech act may be realized, with or without speech act verbs or sentences (e.g., Zhan 1992; García 1993, 1996). This is not strictly speaking a pitfall, but it is something we should at least be aware of. The first group of scholars group languages according to whether they have certain formal speech act structures. Vanderveken writes:

Some illocutionary forces are syntactically realized in many but not all actual languages. For example, most languages (but not Chinese) have optative sentences in order to express the speaker’s wish. Other illocutionary forces are only realized syntactically in a very small number of sentences. For example, most languages (except Korean) do not have *promissive* sentences in order to commit the speaker to a future course of action that is presupposed to be good for the hearer. (1990, p. 21)

It should not be assumed, however, that languages that do not have a word or a sentence type for a particular speech act cannot perform the speech act in another way. For example, even if, according to Vanderveken, Chinese does not have optative sentences to express the speaker’s wish, it should not be taken to mean that Chinese cannot express the speaker’s wish (in another way).



To use a more concrete example, Chinese does not appear to have the grammatical means to generate English interrogative-directives such as these:

Would/could you do this?  
Do this, would/could you?

However, Chinese can express a similar meaning in another way, using paraphrase. I propose the following paraphrase, formulated with input from Anna Wierzbicka (email), to describe the general meaning of interrogative directives:

I want you to do something  
I want it to be like this: you do it because you want to do it  
at the same time, I think about it like this:  
maybe you will do it  
maybe you will not do it  
I don't know  
I want you to say something about it to me now because I want to know

This formula expresses the speaker's desire for the addressee to do something and their respect for the speaker's will. The last part, which requires the addressee to say something, reflects the question form used. Obviously, even though the Chinese can formulate requests, it does not mean that Chinese speakers are predisposed to making requests on a daily basis like English speakers are, simply because Chinese people generally do not value personal autonomy the way or to the extent that native English speakers do.

It might be added that the questions "Does language X have speech act verb/sentence Y?" and "How does language X express speech act Y, especially if there is not a word or a sentence type for it?" are different questions and reflect different focuses. It is noticed that scholars who ask the first question do not necessarily engage the second question. However, it seems that the second question is the more important one. Searching for answers to the second question would presumably take us to a deeper level of understanding of speech acts and help us answer questions pertaining to their lexicalization and grammaticalization, and the motivation underlying these processes.

### **3 A "Simple Language" Approach to the Study of Speech Acts**

The several related problems or issues associated with the study of speech acts discussed in this chapter have mostly or much to do with the metalanguage, which is usually English. Scholars often see things from an English perspective, a case of ethnocentrism or, more specifically, Anglocentrism. I hasten to add that the objection here is not the use of English but rather the use of English-specific categories to understand language- and/or culture-specific categories of other languages. When we study speech acts in an "other" language, we engage in a cross-cultural act, and it is best that we do not use mainly language-specific categories as the analytic tool. A better way might be to use categories native to that language. In this way,

we describe a language in its own terms, with minimal cultural imposition from the metalanguage.

Obviously, this lands the analyst in a dilemma. On the one hand, an analyst might want to use English (to reach an international audience) even though it is not native to the culture of study. On the other hand, the best analytic tool is one that relies on native categories. The analyst is thus faced with a conflicting situation: the need to represent native categories in a foreign metalanguage. Fortunately, the conflict is only apparent. What the analyst could do is to use linguistic categories that are universal or at least near universal as the analytic tool. Language universals are native to all languages and can thus describe any language in its own terms. They can describe language-specific features of an “other” language with maximal clarity and minimal ethnocentrism.

A number of studies (e.g., Goddard 2008; Goddard and Wierzbicka 1994, 2002; Peeters 2006; Yoon 2005) suggest that the kind of language universals we need to describe language-specific categories come in the form of words or phrases, called “semantic primes” (see Table 32.1; Goddard 2011, p. 66) and universal combinations of these words to form sentences that are expressible in any language. These studies have identified over 60 semantic primes which are believed to have counterparts in all languages. Some of these studies have also identified certain combinations of these primes as universals, in that the combination may be rendered in any language (using language-specific grammar) to yield the same meaning. These semantic primes and universal combinations constitute a metalanguage, which some scholars call *natural semantic metalanguage* (NSM). Practitioners believe, on the basis of research, that NSM can serve as a descriptively adequate analytic tool for describing language-specific features. In fact, NSM has been used to fruitfully analyze a number of related and unrelated languages and cultures (e.g., Goddard 2011; Wierzbicka 1996b, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2006a, 2013). There is thus ample evidence to suggest that NSM is a useful analytic tool for understanding language and culture.

It should be pointed out at this juncture that a particularly important keyword in the study of speech acts seems to be the semantic prime *say*. Its uniqueness lies in the idea that it is singularly the only semantic prime that underlies all other, language-specific speech act verbs; the meaning of all speech act verbs embodies the meaning of *say*.

To study speech acts across cultures, regardless of the approach, the use of a relatively simple metalanguage such as NSM at the outset would prove fruitful. It seems to be the only way scholars can hope to maximize clarity and minimize ethnocentrism. In what follows, with reference to Searle’s categories of speech acts, I would like to demonstrate how NSM may be used to understand speech acts.

### 3.1 Searle’s Categories of Speech Acts in Simple English

In this section, Searle’s five categories of speech acts—assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations—are reformulated in terms of NSM. This approach to the study of speech acts can hopefully place us in a better position to

**Table 32.1** English semantic primes

Categories	Semantic primes (universals)
Substantives	<i>I, you, someone/person, people, something/thing, body</i>
Relational substantives	<i>Kind (of), part (of)</i>
Determiners	<i>This, the same, other/else</i>
Quantifiers	<i>One, two, some, all, much/many</i>
Evaluators and descriptors	<i>Good, bad, big, small</i>
Mental predicates	<i>Think, know, want, feel, see, hear</i>
Speech	<i>Say, words, true</i>
Actions, events, movement, contact	<i>Do, happen, move, touch</i>
Location, existence, possession, specification	<i>Be (somewhere), there is, have, be (someone/something)</i>
Life and death	<i>Live, die</i>
Time	<i>When/time, now, before, after, a long time, a short time, for some time, moment</i>
Space	<i>Where/place, here, above, below, far, near, side, inside</i>
Logical concepts	<i>Not, maybe, can, because, if</i>
Intensifier, augmentor	<i>Very, more</i>
Similarity	<i>Like/how</i>

identify universals of use and give us a clue as to what Searle’s categories are precisely about.

According to Searle, assertives “commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something’s being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition” (1979, p. 12) and “represent how things are in the world” (2007, p. 31). The “direction of fit” is “words to the world” (Searle 1979, p. 12). Examples include “*suggesting that p*” and “*flatly stating that p*” (Searle 1979, p. 13). All this seems to suggest that the speech acts Searle would place under the category *assertive* might embody the following components.

someone X says something to someone Y about something Z  
 because they want this someone Y to know how they think about it  
 this someone X says something like this: “I think that it is like this”

On the basis of Searle’s description, the dictum that reflects an assertive is, in its simplest form, “I think that it is like this.” This dictum is consistent with an act that commits the speaker to maintaining that something is the case and attempting to represent how things are in the world, thereby fitting words to the world. However, this formulation is not unproblematic. Firstly, while it may describe “suggest,” it does not seem to describe “state.” Secondly, the category of assertives is also supposed to express the speaker’s commitment to the “truth” (1979, p. 12) of something but in his discussion of the overlapping of members between assertives and declarations, Searle says:

Some members of the class of declarations overlap with members of the class of assertives. This is because in certain institutional situations we not only ascertain the facts but we need an authority to lay down a decision as to what the facts are after the fact-finding procedure has been gone through. (Searle 1979, p. 19)

This means that Searle associates the category of assertives with not just truths but facts as well, even though there is a significant difference between the two. A statement about a truth might look something like this: “it is *true*” while a statement about a fact, like this: “*I know* that it is like this.” There are important differences between a truth and a fact (Wierzbicka 2006a) but the category of assertives conflates the two and obscures a very important distinction.

To take the distinction into consideration, the formula may be revised:

someone X says something to someone Y about something Z  
because they want this someone Y to know something  
this someone X says something like this: “it is like this”

This proposed explication is less specific than the previous one but it allows both thought and knowledge to be included. The component “to know something” can refer to “know how the speaker thinks about something” or something factual. However, I am not sure if this formula represents a useful category simply because it does not make the important distinction between truths and facts, and between opinions and facts for that matter, but it at least appears to describe what Searle calls an assertive.

Turning our attention now to directives, their “illocutionary point” is “to get the hearer to do something” (Searle 1979, p. 14, 2007, p. 31) and “the sincerity condition is want (or wish or desire)” (Searle 1979, p. 14). This category includes verbs like *invite* (e.g., “I invite you to do it”), *suggest* (“I suggest that you do it”), and *insist* (“I insist that you do it”; Searle 1979, p. 13). A directive may be tentatively described in this way:

someone X says something to someone Y because they want Y to do something Z  
this someone X says something like this: “I want you to do it”

Initially, the set of directives may seem easy to define, but it is actually not as straightforward as it seems. I have difficulty in formulating a dictum that can describe “I invite...” and “I suggest” on the one hand and “I insist...” on the other hand. When a speaker suggests that the addressee does something, it may not always mean that the speaker *wants* them to do it. It remains a suggestion and the dictum could look something like:

I think that it is good if you do it  
I think that you can do it if you think it is good to do it

This is evidenced in “directives” (by Searle’s definition) like “you’re welcome to join us” or “join us if you want,” in which the speaker lets the addressee decide what they want to do. On the other hand, such a dictum does not appear to describe “I insist that you do it.” What all this means is that Searle’s category of directives is not watertight and only very loosely groups at least two kinds of speech acts together. Then again, perhaps Searle’s directives could be defined indirectly in this way:

someone X says something to someone Y  
 this something has words that say “do this thing Z”  
 because of this, this someone Y may do this thing Z

This formula is obviously not satisfactory mainly because of the modal in the final component. The word “may” represents uncertainty but in commands (e.g., military commands), “may” does not make sense. When a military command is issued, it is expected that things *will*, not *may*, get done. Thus, in my opinion, it does not seem to make sense to categorize suggestions on what the addressee can do and invitations, which reflect respect for one’s freewill, and commands, which does not, together. A solution might be to omit the final component but then the “effect” of the utterance would be left unaccounted for.

Commissives are said to commit the speaker to “some future course of action” (Searle 1979, p. 14). The “direction of fit” is “world to word” and the “sincerity condition” is “intention” (Searle 1979, p. 14). Additionally, commissives are similar to directives in one respect; their “task” is to “get the world to change to match the content of the speech act, and thus they have the world-to-word direction of fit” (Searle 2007, p. 31). An example of a commissive is *promise*. Here is a proposed formula for the category of commissives.

someone X says something to someone Y  
 because they want Y to know that they will do something Z  
 this someone X says something like this: “I will do it”

The dictum “I will do it” embodies intention and tells the addressee that the speaker wants to change something in the world to match the content of what is to be done. This category appears to be minimally problematic.

Expressives “express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content” (Searle 1979, p. 15). In simpler terms, their illocutionary point is to “express some psychological state of the speaker” (Searle 2007, p. 31) or, in other words, to manifest “a mental state of a certain psychological mode...” (Vanderveken 1990, p. 23). Searle also adds that the “task” of this category is “to express the speaker’s *feelings* about a state of affairs that is already presupposed to exist” (2007, p. 32, emphasis added). Examples include *thank*, *congratulate*, *apologize*, *condole*, *deplore*, and *welcome* (Searle 1979, p. 15).

The explanations and examples, however, do not seem illuminating. In particular, I find Searle’s earlier reference to “psychological state” rather confusing. According to Searle, it mainly refers to “the *sincerely condition* of the act” (1979, p. 5, original italics). Examples of psychological states include *belief*, *desire*, *intention*, *regret*, and *pleasure* (Searle 1979, p. 4). However, I see no semantic commonality or similarity among these verbs. After all, *belief* has to do with what one *thinks* about something; *desire* and *intention*, what one *wants*; and *regret* and *pleasure*, what one *feels* about something. In other words, Searle’s idea of psychological state may be associated with what/how one (1) *thinks*, (2) *wants*, and (3) *feels*, all of which are conceptually distinct from one another. However, for the purposes of this demonstration, I go with Searle’s explanation regarding “the speaker’s feelings” (2007, p. 32), which refers to how one feels. This leads us to the following explication.

someone X says something to someone Y because they want Y to know  
 that they feel something about something Z  
 this someone X says something like this: "I feel something about it"

The dictum "I feel something about it" is meant to cover all human feelings, good, bad, or otherwise. Obviously, it does not say anything about what one thinks and what one wants.

The fifth category is the set of declarations, which "bring about some alteration in the status or condition of the referred to object or objects solely in virtue of the fact that the declaration has been successfully performed" (Searle 1979, p. 17). In other words, the "task" of this class of verbs "is to bring about changes in the world by representing the world as being so changed, and thus they have both directions of fit simultaneously" (2007, p. 32). In my view, this category is rather special because it requires the speaker to possess authority to execute certain things by saying something. For example, anyone can, for fun, say the words "I pronounce you man and wife" but only certain people (e.g., priests) have the authority to make the relation legally binding. Thus, we need to first define the speaker (someone X).

some kinds of people are like this  
 when they say something like, "it is like this now"  
 something happens because of this  
 it can only happen when these kinds of people say it  
 it can't happen when other kinds of people say it  
 everybody knows it  
 someone X is someone of one of these kinds of people

Here is the proposed definition of the category of declarations.

someone X says something to someone Y because they want this someone Y to know  
 that something may not be the same after they say it  
 this someone X says something like this:  
 "(before now, maybe it was not like this)  
 I say: now, it is like this"

The dictum for this category is rather simple: "I say: it is like this." The component "I say" reflects the idea that a declarative is usually performed with a speech act verb. As Vanderveken points out, the declarative use "consists of expressing a proposition *P* with the illocutionary point of performing the present action that *P* represents just *by saying that one is performing that action*" (1990, p. 23, emphasis added). Otherwise, this is similar to the dictum for assertive. My formula also proposes that there is usually an implied, unspoken "before now, maybe it was not like this." This represents a possible change in something (e.g., from single to married in marital status). However, the change is not always present as Searle implies. For example, a judge may acquit a defendant in court and declare his innocence. A defendant is legally not guilty before the verdict is passed, and it is possible that they are not guilty after that either, which means there is no change in status.

In what follows, I summarize what the dictums of five categories of speech acts are presumably about.

*an assertive* = it is like this  
*a directive* = ...do it (or often "I want you to do it")  
*a commissive* = I will do it

*an expressive* = I feel something about it  
*a declarative* = I say: it is like this now

All these represent the “bare minimum” and do not account for the inherent uncertainties in Searle’s categories. For example, going by Searle’s definition of the category of assertives, there could be at least two formulations of the category:

it is like this

I say it to you because I want you to know something =

i) it is like this

I say it to you because I want you to know it

(e.g. “The chemical formula for water is H<sub>2</sub>O.”)

ii) it is like this

I say it to you because I want you to know that I think about it like this

(e.g. “She sang well, didn’t she?”)

Similarly, the category of directives could also be explained by several different formulations:

(An “obligation-based” directive)

I want you to do it

I think that you will do it because of this (e.g. “Open the door.”)

(A command or order)

I want you to do it

because of this, you can’t not do it (e.g. “Open fire!” in a battlefield)

(A “request”)

I want you to do it

at the same time, I know that you don’t have to do it if you don’t want to

(e.g. “Could you open the door?”)

(A suggestion)

I think that it will be good if you do it

at the same time, you don’t have to do it because I think like this

As mentioned, the point in expressing the five categories in simple English or NSM is to demonstrate how illuminating such a metalanguage can be. As can be seen, not only can it express the meaning of each category more clearly but also forces the analyst to be more precise and highlights problems with specifying a “sincerity condition” for each category.

Another advantage of using NSM is that it allows us to test the universality of the categories. According to Vanderveken, Searle’s five categories of speech acts represent “five basic universal ways to use language” and these are the “only five” universal ways (1990, p. 22). I present the proposed dictums here again:

it is like this (assertive)

...do it (directive)

I will do it (commissive)

I feel something about it (expressive)

I say: it is like this now (declarative)

Looking at my proposed dictums again, it is not difficult to agree with Vanderveken that they are universals. It seems intuitive that all languages can express these five categories on the basis of these five structures. Indeed, a number of studies concerning semantic universals (e.g., Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002; in particular,

Chap. 2, Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002; Peeters 2006) suggest as much. However, I hasten to add that this is not to say that the words *assertive*, *directive*, *commissive*, *expressive*, and *declarative* are language universals. They are clearly not. The point is simply that all languages have the means to generate these dictums.

### 3.2 *How Many Categories?*

While it seems fairly reasonable to assume that the dictums of Searle's five categories of speech acts are universal, Vanderveken's assertion that "there are only five basic universal ways to use language" (referring to Searle's five categories; 1990, p. 22) may be more questionable. In my view, it is difficult to support this claim and it is just as difficult to refute it. Partly, the problem lies in the inherent vagueness in the degree of specificity of the dictums, the "sincerity conditions," and what the speaker wants to achieve.

To illustrate my point, consider the category of the expressives, which I propose may be represented by this formula:

someone X says something to someone Y because they want Y to know  
that they feel something about something Z  
this someone X says something like this: "I feel something about it"

This degree of specificity is rather low and can describe a host of speech act verbs. However, we could hypothetically raise the level of specificity by positing two formulae (representing two distinct categories of speech acts) on the basis of the one above:

- i. someone X says something to someone Y because they want Y to know  
that they feel something good about something Z  
this someone X says something like this: "I feel something good about it"
- ii. someone X says something to someone Y because they want Y to know  
that they feel something bad about something Z  
this someone X says something like this: "I feel something bad about it"

The question to ask now is if one can justifiably posit these two as distinct speech act categories and, presumably, the answer depends on which language(s) we look at. If we look at English, we see that these two categories are both distinct and important. The first category may be associated with the English (especially American English) tendency to sound positive and happy (Wierzbicka 2004b; Wong 2005). The second category can refer to acts of apology and expressions of regrets. Thus, from the perspective of English, one category may be sufficient because it can subsume both. However, for cultures that do not exhibit the first tendency (to sound positive and happy) or in which the tendency is not culturally salient, the first formula may be less important than the second one. In this case, a more specific formula (the second one) is preferred.

Moreover, depending on how we formulate the dictum and the speaker's purpose, there seems to be potentially a large number of possible categories. For example, I could formulate something like this to represent a distinct category:



someone X says something to someone Y because they want Y to feel something bad  
 this someone X says something like this:  
 “there is something very bad about you  
 I think something very bad about you because of this”

This formula would presumably subsume speech acts like *insult*, *offend*, (*verbally*) *abuse*, etc.

Here is another possible category:

someone X says something to someone Y  
 because they want Y to know that they think something like this about Y:  
 “you are someone above me”

This category reflects deference for things that put people higher up on a hierarchy, such as ranking or age, for example. The category would describe the use of address forms like the English *sir/ma'am* (as used in the military) and *Your Majesty*. It would also include the Singapore English *uncle* and *aunty* (Wong 2006a, b), all of which place the addressee on “higher ground.”

In what follows, I present three more possible categories with commentaries.

(i) someone X says something to someone Y  
 because this someone X thinks that it may be good if Y can do something  
 this someone X says something like this: “I think that it may be good if you do it”  
 (e.g. *advise*, *encourage*)

Such a category seems similar to the category of directives but there is an important difference. The speaker does not necessarily want the addressee to do something. They are merely suggesting that it might be a good idea. An example might be: “Why don’t you give it a go?” Here, the speaker could be encouraging the addressee to do something but there is no expectation that they *want* the addressee to do it.

(ii) someone X says something to someone Y  
 because they want Y to know what will happen at a time after this:  
 “this will happen at a time after this” (e.g., *predict*, *foretell*, *soothsay*, *prophesize*)

It might be argued that this proposed category could come under the category of assertives but there is a difference. The dictum for assertives is something akin to “it is like this” whereas for this group it has to be “it will be like this.” The temporal difference is important and relates to the difference between the perceptibly known (present) and the largely unknown (future).

(iii) someone X says something to someone Y  
 because X wants something (good/bad) to happen to Y  
 this someone X says something like this, “I want something (good/bad) to happen to you”  
 (e.g. *bless*, *curse*)

Words like *bless* and *curse* that are supposed to relate to future events do not seem to neatly fall into any of Searle’s five categories. The closest is the set of declarations but these verbs cannot be seriously considered declarations (in Searle’s sense).

My proposed formulae reflect the obvious problems associated with the use of language-specific, “big” words that many scholars appear to favor. These “big” words obscure finer distinctions (e.g., between *know* and *think*). Relying on them

can also be restrictive in the sense that there may not be a word that can adequately describe a particular kind of speech act (e.g., *blessings and curses*). We also risk understanding speech acts through the filter of these words. Using simple English, on the other hand, allows us to make fine distinctions and adequately describe any speech act or kind of speech act for what it is.

Ultimately, my purpose in this section is to question Vanderveken's claim that Searle's five categories of speech acts represent the *only* five basic universal ways to use language and to show that the number of universal categories depends much on the level of specificity we want and how we formulate the categories. This may imply that the question of how many speech act categories there are is not a particularly meaningful one after all.

Besides vagueness, another problem with Searle's categories seems to be arbitrariness. There is no obvious consistency in his categories to reflect how they relate to one another. A better approach might be to formulate basic categories on the basis of the intention of the speaker in this way:

- someone X says something to someone Y because they want this someone Y to:
- i. know something;
  - ii. think something;
  - iii. want something;
  - iv. feel something;
  - v. do something.

These five categories represent five kinds of intention as expressed by five semantic primes: *know*, *think*, *want*, *feel*, and *do*. These proposed categories are dissimilar to Searle's but they reflect more clarity than Searle's do, which makes it relatively easy for an analyst to decide which category or categories a speech act could fall into. These proposed categories are also more systematically formulated, which allows for comparison and contrast. However, despite these advantages, such proposed basic categories, like Searle's, could obscure significant cultural differences between possible members and may lead one to wonder, yet again, if the question of how many speech act categories there are is a useful one.

### 3.3 *Approaching Speech Acts*

In view of the problems associated with the use of speech act labels, sentences, and language-specific categories, I propose that, when we study speech acts, we do not refer to speech act names at the outset. Instead, it seems better to think about speech acts in simple, universal, or near-universal terms. In this way, the analyst would be minimally predisposed to think in language-specific categories; they would be in a better position to observe the object of study with maximal clarity. However, even when one uses NSM, one has to be careful not to fall into another kind of ethnocentrism.

Let me use an example to explain what I mean. Commenting on the CCSARP, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain write, "The goals of the project are to compare across

languages the realization patterns of two speech acts—requests and apologies—and to...” (1984, p. 196). The assumptions seem to be that words like *request* and *apology* are language universals and that all cultures think in terms of these words, which are, of course, not true. To avoid ethnocentrism, the analyst could ask similar questions using simple English:

What do people say to someone when they want to say something like this:  
 “I want you to do it/I have done something bad to you”  
 How do people say it when they want to say something like this:  
 “I want you to do it/I have done something bad to you”

This looks good, except that they could land the analyst in (what I would call) pragmatic ethnocentrism. In English, the dictum “I have done something bad to you” is an important cultural notion and is associated with the important speech act of apologizing, in which the speaker acknowledges his fault. In some other cultures, this notion may not be as important because their members may prefer to say something like “something bad has happened to you because of me, I feel something bad now because of this,” which can refer to situations in which the speaker is at fault as well as situations in which the speaker is not. Thus, the analyst is faced with the question of which formula to use as a starting point.

A more helpful approach might be what Pan calls the “situational approach,” in which: “Definition of the situation [...] is the initial step we take in determining how to act appropriately or politely” (2000, p. 16). The idea is to identify culturally significant situations, i.e., situations which predispose speakers of a particular language to say something standard or near standard, without reference to any dictum. Questions such as these could be asked:

What do people say to someone when they want this someone to do something?  
 What do people say to someone when they have done something bad to this someone?  
 What do people say to someone when this someone has done something good for them?

After formulating research questions in universal or near-universal language, we can then bring in language-specific words (e.g., *request* and *apology*) to answer the questions. An answer might look something like this:

When they want someone to do something, English speakers usually make a *request* in the form of a question while Chinese speakers, in unmarked situations, tend to use an imperative (i.e. *do it*). This means that English speakers tend to *ask* people to do things while Chinese speakers tend to *tell* people to do things. (...)

Something like this might also be said regarding so-called apology:

When they have done something bad (but not very bad) to someone, English speakers tend to *apologize* whereas it can be enough for Chinese and Japanese speakers to say that they feel bad about it, which can be “bùhǎo yìsì” and “sumimasen” respectively. (...)

Consider also this (partial) answer:

When someone has done something good for them, English speakers tend to say “thank you” (or *thank* them) whereas it can be enough for Chinese and Japanese speakers to say that they feel something bad about it, like “bùhǎo yìsì” and “sumimasen” respectively, implying that in doing something good for them, something bad has happened to the benefactor.

And this:

When something happens to someone Y because of them (without necessarily being their fault), English, Chinese, and Japanese speakers can say something like this to this someone Y: “I feel something bad now”. English speakers may say “I feel bad”, Chinese speakers often say “bùhǎo yisi”, and Japanese speakers usually say “sumimasen”.

(According to NSM scholars, there is a difference between the English “I feel bad” and “I feel something bad.” The meaning of the latter is more basic and the component may be used to describe “negative” feelings like *sad*, *upset*, and *angry*. The former seems to be semantically and pragmatically more complex.)

Obviously, I am grossly simplifying things here, for even within a situation, different things might be said depending on a host of possible variables, like gender, age, social class, “familiarity/closeness,” etc. My point is basically to demonstrate how a simple metalanguage might be used to articulate cultural-specific ideas more illuminatingly.

Additionally, the use of a simple metalanguage has important implications for language pedagogy and cultural adaptation. The way some scholars use or misuse words like *request* and *apology* can be rather misleading to learners or nonnative speakers of English. It gives them incorrect ideas about what the words really mean and thus impedes their learning of the language and understanding of English-speaking cultures.

### 3.4 *Demystifying Speech Acts*

To understand what a speech act is, one might first look at the proposed formulae of the various categories and see what they have in common. On the basis of my analysis, a speech act may have a basic semantic structure that looks like this:

someone X says something to someone Y  
because this someone X wants Y to know/think/want/feel/do something

As my formula suggests, a speech act takes place when a speaker says something to their addressee because they want the addressee to know, think, want, feel, or do something. This seems to imply that basically anything said to someone is a speech act. As Goddard points out, a speech act verb is “a label for something that you can do in or by saying something” (2011, p. 130) and the very act of saying something is doing something because the addressee at least ends up knowing what the speaker wanted to say. In fact, an addressee may not even be important, as when one is swearing. Further, it appears that any form of linguistic or paralinguistic communication (e.g., intonation and even silence according to some) is a speech act. However, for many scholars, one of the main things that matter is whether a speech act has an English name, but this preferential treatment has unfairly privileged some speech acts over others. It does not help much in our quest for a deeper understanding of what speech acts are about.

## 4 Concluding Remarks

In many studies on language and culture, be it in the field of philosophy, linguistics, or anthropology, the one common problem seems to be Anglocentrism, or the tendency to see other languages and cultures from the perspective of English. All too often English-specific categories are used to describe purported universal categories and language-specific features of use.

In this chapter, I argue that to understand speech acts, it is a good idea to abandon all language-specific labels and start from a “culturally uncontaminated” slate. We could formulate research questions using universal or near-universal categories and then introduce language-specific words and sentences in answering the questions. Language-specific categories could then be compared and contrasted using, again, universal or near-universal categories.

Admittedly, some “big” words are so deeply entrenched in the discourse of language and culture that it seems sacrilegious to even think that they are language specific and unsuitable for metalinguistic use. These include commonly used words like *culture*, *emotion*, *moral sense*, *experience*, and, of course, *speech act*. However, studies have suggested that many of these words are not universal categories but language-specific artifacts of English (Wierzbicka 1999, 2007, 2010; Goddard 2005). They reflect quintessentially English ways of looking at things but because English is fast becoming a universal or near-universal language, it gives the incorrect impression that English is a culturally universal language.

While it may be difficult for scholars to abandon the use of English-specific metalinguistic words (and I am not suggesting that we should for the sake of brevity), my conviction is that we can understand other languages and cultures without fully relying on many of these words. Such words at best provide convenience and conciseness for scholars but may not do much to facilitate an in-depth understanding of cultures. For example, while I find the word *culture*, which roughly refers to a set of ways of thinking and doing things, metalinguistically useful, even if it does not have a semantic equivalent in Chinese, and have, in fact, used it often in academic writing, I do not find words like *emotion*, *politeness*, and *morality* particularly helpful. Research questions formulated with such words could be replaced by similar questions articulated in simpler language, such as NSM:

- How do people think/feel when something like this happens?
- What do people say/do when something like this happens?
- How do people say/do it?
- What is good/bad to say/do when something like this happens?
- Why is it good/bad to say/do this when something like this happens?

Of course, one has to sacrifice conciseness for clarity and precision. It may also take time to get such formulations right. However, such a sacrifice may sometimes be helpful because it can enhance or deepen our cultural understanding. In fact, if we used simple language as the analytic tool, I would even go so far as to argue that we could fruitfully study and understand speech acts across languages and cultures without the benefit of the term *speech act*.

Lastly, I would like to add that whether a researcher wants to use a maximally language- and culture-independent metalanguage such as NSM to understand speech acts is his prerogative. It ultimately depends on the importance he places on the problem of ethnocentrism that is inherent in every natural language (and specifically Anglocentrism in the case of English, the most widely used language in academia). Hopefully, this chapter makes it abundantly clear that ethnocentrism is indeed a major obstacle to the understanding of the universals of language use, and can thus generate further discussion on the use of NSM as an analytical tool for the study of speech acts.

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# The Pragmatics of *Kéyǐ* (“Can”) in Singapore Mandarin

Jock Wong

**Abstract** The object of study in this chapter is the pragmatics of the non-Standard Singapore Mandarin equivalent of the English *can* (可以; *kéyǐ*). This chapter describes some of the speech acts it is associated with and represents some of these speech norms in the form of cultural scripts formulated using the natural semantic metalanguage (NSM). It is hoped that the cultural scripts will facilitate a better understanding of the cultural values underlying the use of this word. This chapter also contrasts some of these speech norms with their English counterparts to highlight their culture specificity and further examines examples from standard Mandarin to explain their cultural significance. This chapter additionally shows that speech acts are often culture specific, and speech acts specific to one language (in this case, English) cannot adequately describe speech acts specific to another (Singapore Mandarin, in this case). The proposed solution is NSM, a metalanguage that comprises semantic primes and universal combinations of the primes, which is also what the previous chapter advocates for the study of speech acts. As this chapter tries to show, NSM can clearly explain Singapore Mandarin speech acts associated with the word *kéyǐ* and, in doing so, clarify the language-specific use of the Singapore Mandarin semantic equivalent of the English *can*.

A number of authentic examples are studied and they suggest that the relationship between Singapore Mandarin speakers is often marked by (among other things) social obligations. These obligations have to do with priority given to what one is able to do over what one wants to do. Speakers tend to de-emphasize what one (either the speaker or someone else) wants to do and, in doing so, go against some of Grice’s maxims and Brown and Levinson’s politeness principles. Singapore Mandarin culture, which has a strong presence in Singaporean society, may thus be considered “collectivist,” which means that personal autonomy is not a high-ranking value and may not be something that people, at least among the older generations, are generally familiar with.

It is also noted that some of the Singapore Mandarin ways of speaking associated with *kéyǐ* have found their way into Singapore English, used also by non-Mandarin

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speakers, including native English speakers who have lived in Singapore for a substantial period of time. This observation seems to suggest that the speech norms in question are a Singaporean feature rather than merely a feature of Singapore Mandarin. This chapter has implications for cross-cultural communication, cultural adaptation, and language pedagogy in the cultural context of Singapore.

**Keywords** Pragmatics and culture · Mandarin “can” · Speech acts · Singaporean Mandarin · NSM

## 1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the use of the ubiquitous non-Standard Singapore Mandarin equivalent of the English *can* (可以; *kéyǐ*) on the basis of a number of examples collected from authentic exchanges (e.g., face-to-face conversations and short message service (SMS) messages) and describe some of the speech acts it is associated with. In particular, I focus on how Singapore Mandarin speakers use the word *kéyǐ* in the formulation of offers to do something for the addressee, suggestions on what can be done, assessments, and other related speech acts. I then present some of the norms and values associated with the word in the form of cultural scripts using the natural semantic metalanguage (NSM). Lastly, given that the pragmatics of Singapore Mandarin *kéyǐ* is also characteristic of Singapore English, I propose that the speech norms associated with *kéyǐ* may be considered features of Singapore culture.

The examples suggest that some of the ways the Singapore Mandarin *kéyǐ* is used are atypical of Anglo English.<sup>1</sup> As shall be seen in later sections, they further suggest that the use of *kéyǐ* routinely violates some of Grice’s maxims (e.g., that pertaining to relevance) and Brown and Levinson’s politeness rules (e.g., negative face). They also suggest that Singapore Chinese culture could be considered “collectivist” (cf. Poole, this volume), where family members and friends tend to see themselves as part of a collective whole (either temporarily or permanently) with obligations towards each other in a given interaction, rather than separate, distinct individuals. It should be said that a number of these examples may not strike the reader as being remarkable from an Anglo-English perspective, but the examples should be viewed collectively. The ways in which the word for *can* in Singapore Mandarin is used may or may not be characteristic of Anglo English, but the point that this chapter tries to make is that the word seems to be ubiquitous in Singapore Mandarin and may thus be considered a Singapore Mandarin cultural keyword.

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this study, Anglo English (or simply “English”) refers collectively to any of the English variety spoken by “a white person from a traditionally English-speaking country” (Gupta, 1994, pp. 14–15). Traditional sociolinguists refer to it as “native English.” While some authors use the term “Anglo” English (and thus “Anglo” culture) (Goddard, 2006, pp. 2, 6; Wierzbicka, 2006a, p. 13), others refer to it as “inner circle” English (Kachru, 1985; Wong 2006). It does not refer to varieties of English which have been developed from nonnative varieties, such as African-American Vernacular English (“Black” English) and Singapore English, even if they are now spoken natively by many people.

Hopefully, this chapter could in a small way advance some understanding of how Singapore Chinese people think and provide implications for cross-cultural communication, cultural adaptation, and even language pedagogy in the context of a society like Singapore.

## 2 The Modal Can

The English modal verb *can* has, of course, been the subject of many studies (Coates 1983; Palmer 1990; Hoye 1997). However, despite the scholarly attention the word has received, there is no consensus on what it means. On the one hand, some scholars describe its meaning in terms of words like *ability*, *possibility*, and even *permission*, which implies that its meaning is fairly complex. On the other hand, some scholars posit the word as a semantic prime, which means that the word *can* is indefinable, has a meaning that is inherently simple and intuitively clear (Goddard and Wierzbicka 1994, 2002a), and has a semantic equivalent in every other natural language (e.g., *kéyǐ* in Mandarin; Chappell 2002). These scholars maintain that, although there is a “*can* of ability” and a “*can* of possibility” (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002b, p. 74), the two instances represent the same word. They argue that the sense of *ability* arises from the combination “can do something” and the sense of possibility from “can be like this”; the senses of ability and possibility are not an inherent part of the meaning of the word *can*, which they claim is indefinable. All this means that, according to scholars like Goddard and Wierzbicka, the word *can* simply means “can” and is a semantic universal. This line of argument seems to me to make sense. After all, if we explain the word *can* in terms of words like *ability*, *possibility*, and *permission*, we move in the direction of increased complexity, which may be considered a “pitfall” of defining (Goddard 2011, p. 33). It is like replacing an unknown with another unknown. Given that there does not seem to be a way of defining *can* in simpler terms at this stage, the only logical conclusion is that it is a semantic prime, cannot be defined, and is to be accepted as a “known.” However, it seems clear that, even if the word cannot be defined in these terms, the meaning of the word is perhaps related to concepts like *ability* and *possibility*, if only because these concepts have to be defined in terms of *can*.

While the English word *can* is much discussed, the same cannot be said about the word in other languages, such as Singapore Mandarin, a variety of Mandarin that has been structurally and pragmatically shaped by the dominant southern Chinese languages spoken in Singapore (i.e., Fujian and Cantonese). It must not be assumed that the word, even if it is a semantic universal, is used the same way in all languages. As someone who is familiar with the language, I have noticed interesting speech norms associated with the Singapore Mandarin *kéyǐ* (可以) which are not characteristic of Anglo English. Given that speech norms can reflect important cultural values (Wong 2010; Wierzbicka 1997), studying the use of *kéyǐ* in Singapore Mandarin could reveal something about some of the important speech norms and cultural values that Singapore Mandarin speakers uphold.

In the following sections, a number of examples of the Singapore Mandarin *kéyǐ* are presented. Although some of the examples may reflect Anglo English uses, others do not. All these examples considered together reflect the cultural importance of the word in Singapore Mandarin, a cultural importance which may not be accorded to the word *can* in Anglo English.

### 3 The Formulation of Cultural Scripts

For the purpose of clarity, the cultural scripts that are used to represent speech norms are written using the NSM. NSM comprises a set of semantic primes or words which are indefinable and found in all languages. NSM formulations refer to combinations of semantic primes that are presumably allowed in all languages and which yield the same meaning in each instance. Because NSM meanings are presumed to be simple and language independent, NSM allows speech norms and cultural rules to be described in the form of cultural scripts with maximal clarity and minimal ethnocentrism.

As the theory of NSM and its applications have been extensively discussed in a number of publications, nothing more will be said here. The interested reader could refer to any of the publications on NSM for in-depth discussions and how it may be used to formulate meaning and cultural rules (e.g., Gladkova, this volume; Goddard 2006, 2008, 2011; Goddard and Wierzbicka 1994, 2002a; Peeters 2006; Wakefield, this volume, forthcoming; Wierzbicka 1991, 1992, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2010, 2013).

### 4 The Discourse of *Kéyǐ* in Singapore Mandarin

In this section, a number of examples of use of the Singapore Mandarin *kéyǐ* are looked at. These examples could very broadly be categorized as having to do with (1) getting or inviting the addressee to do something, (2) offering to do something for the addressee, (3) giving suggestions or advice to the addressee, and (4) evaluating someone or something. The situations that contextualize the examples may all be considered informal and unmarked.

The categories used are not necessarily mutually exclusive as some examples could fall into more than one category. For example, a person could get someone to do something by using a suggestion. However, this issue should not adversely affect the pursuit of some of the underlying values and assumptions governing the use of the Singapore Mandarin *kéyǐ*.

#### 4.1 *Some Grammatical Considerations*

A good place to start our discussion of the Singapore Mandarin *kéyǐ* might be syntax. There is an important syntactic difference between Chinese and English that is

relevant to our discussion. Unlike in English, in Chinese a grammatical subject is not mandatory. For example, where in English one has to say, “There’s someone (‘here/at the door’)”; in Mandarin, one could simply say, “有人” (*yǒurén*; “existential” + “someone”), without a grammatical subject. To take another example, where in English one has to say, “It’s raining”; in Mandarin, one might say, “下雨了” (*xià yǔ le*; “to rain” + aspect marker), again without a grammatical subject. In the English examples, the subjects *there* and *it* do not refer to anything, since one would not expect the addressee to ask, “where’s someone?” or “what’s it?,” which suggests that they fulfill a strictly grammatical need.

One consequence of this Chinese syntactic property is that a Singapore Mandarin speaker can often begin an utterance with *kéyǐ*, such as something like “can do this” without an overt subject. It is also usual for the word to function as a “stand-alone” response; one could simply say, “*kéyǐ*” as a positive response. Syntactically, it might be said that such a structure is headed by the modal. Below are examples in which the modal is used without an overt subject:

A: 你今晚 SMS给我啦 (“You SMS me tonight”)

B: 可以可以 (“can, can”)

Using SMS, someone says that she can meet the addressee for dinner the next day.

明晚可以去吃 (“tomorrow night can go and eat”)

Using SMS, someone agrees upon a suggested meeting time.

可以 (“can,” “it’s possible”)

Using SMS, someone who has asked the addressee to buy a ring for her tells him three-hundred-plus dollars is sufficient.

三百多可以了 (“Three-hundred-plus dollars, can [+aspect marker]”)

When the modal is not headed by a subject, it is not always easy to say what the subject would be if the utterance was translated into English. It could be a human subject or the third person singular pronoun “it.” The first example presented above may be interpreted in the following two ways:

可以 (“can”) = “I can SMS you tonight” OR “it can be like this: I SMS you tonight”

In other words, the modal could be linked to a person or to the situation in question. Something similar might be said of the second example. There can be at least two interpretations, both of which from an Anglo-English perspective may be taken as a “yes”:

明晚可以去吃 (“tomorrow night can go and eat”) =

“Tomorrow night I/we can go and eat”

OR “it can be like this: tomorrow night we go and eat”

This example is particularly interesting because even if we decided to accept the first interpretation, we would still be left with the task of deciding whether the subject is “I” or “we.” Such an example thus suggests that the specific identity of the subject is not always important in Singapore Mandarin *can* constructions.

By contrast, in the third and fourth examples, it seems that the situation is being talked about, and so they are not ambiguous like the previous two seem to be:

可以 (“can”) = “it can be like this: we meet at this time”

三百多可以了 (“three hundred dollars, can [+aspect marker]”) =

“it can be like this: you spend no more than three hundred plus dollars”

In the third example, someone has just proposed a time to the speaker, who is agreeable to it. The speaker says “can” to affirm that the time given is fine. In the last example, it seems clear that the subject of the modal cannot be an animate object. Someone has just asked a friend, a woman, using SMS if it is fine to spend up to US\$300 for her ring. She replies “can” in Chinese to mean that it can be so but no more. Obviously, a human subject would not make much sense here.

Another kind of ambiguous example, in which the identity of the obviously human subject or agent is unclear (like the second example above), is presented below:

In a Japanese restaurant, referring to the pickled ginger which is usually eaten with sushi, someone asks his companion if it can be eaten on its own.

A: 可以这样吃吗? (literally “can eat it like this?” or “can it be eaten like this/on its own?”)

B: 有人这样吃 (“some people eat it like this”)

A: 可以 *mēh* [question particle]? (“Can?” “really?”)

B: 可以 (“can”)

The first question (“can eat it like this?”) may be interpreted as “can it be eaten like this,” a passive construction in Standard English, which is inherently ambiguous because the “agent” cannot be determined without a context. In this example, speaker A could be ambiguously referring to himself or people in general (i.e., either “can I eat it like this” or “can people eat it like this”). The rest of the exchange does not give us any clue either. However, it is noted that this ambiguity does not seem to matter; the exchange evidently results in a successful communicative event.

The examples suggest that, although in Singapore Mandarin there seems to be no conclusive way of determining which subject is intended in many ambiguous cases, the exchanges do not normally result in miscommunication. After all, if the different interpretations serve the same function (e.g., giving or seeking affirmation), then there is little pragmatic difference between “X can do it” and “it can be like this: X does it,” or between “can I do this” or “can people do this,” for the addressee. The ambiguity is unimportant. In the first example above, it does not seem to matter whether the writer is saying, “I can SMS you tonight” or “it can be like this: I SMS you tonight.” As far as the addressee is concerned, he can expect an SMS message from the addressee in the evening. Something similar may be said about the second example; all that matters to the addressee is that he will have dinner with the writer the following evening. I have not come across an instance in which clarification is sought, in which, for example, someone asks whether “can” in such a context means “I can do this” or “it can be like this: I do this.” This may imply that Singapore Mandarin speakers have a tendency to take a pragmatic approach to communication, where precision in meaning is not always an end in itself. If an answer fulfills a practical purpose, semantic ambiguity may be tolerated.

## 4.2 Getting Someone to Do Something

In Anglo English, when a speaker wants someone to do something, the speaker would typically approach the addressee using a question form. This question can take a number of forms (e.g., *Would/could/will/can you do this? Could you do this?*

*Can you do this? Do this, will you? Do you mind doing this? Do you want to do this?*). However, despite their variation in form, all these questions have the pragmatic function of getting the addressee to do something and, if superficially, reflect the speaker’s recognition of the addressee’s right not to comply (Wierzbicka 2006b; Wong 2004a, b, 2005). In unmarked situations, Anglo-English speakers carefully avoid any explicit attempts to tell the addressee what to do and nothing is too small for such questions; regardless of the formality of the situation, a small favor such as passing the salt is often solicited using something like “could/would you pass the salt?” In fact, even when it concerns something (such as an offer) that would obviously benefit the addressee or something which the addressee would obviously want, the speaker similarly exercises care in framing the offer so as not to sound imposing, evident in questions like “Would you like a cup of tea?” This way of speaking points to a cultural emphasis on respecting what the addressee wants and is clearly what Brown and Levinson’s (1987) notions of positive and negative faces are about.

By contrast, in Singapore Mandarin culture, when one wants someone to do something, the emphasis seems to be often about whether the person in question, be it the addressee or a third party, can do it rather than whether they want to do it; in many instances, what one can do seems to be a more important consideration than what one wants to do. Evidence comes from how speakers formulate their directives and how addressees respond to them using *kéyǐ* (“can”).

It should be added that the ways of speaking in question are also found in English. However, as indicated, English offers a number of alternatives (e.g., “could/would/can/will you?”) to its speakers, whereas in Singapore Mandarin the alternatives are more limited. Also, it seems that in English, politeness (e.g., “could you please...?”) is not uncommon even among people who are considered close (e.g., parent and child), whereas in Singapore Mandarin, politeness is not particularly important among close friends, as some of the following common examples show. The examples also suggest that the use of *kéyǐ* seems rather ubiquitous in Singaporean Mandarin, probably more so than *can* is in English:

Using SMS, someone who may be late asks her addressee if he can take her place in a game of mahjong until she arrives.

如果我来不及你可以帮我先打吗?

“If I can’t be on time, can you help me play first?”

Using SMS, someone who doesn’t speak much English asks the addressee if he can send an SMS message to a mutual friend, who doesn’t understand much Chinese.

你可以短讯给[他]吗?他没接我的电话。可能忙吧!

“Can you SMS him? He didn’t answer my call. Possibly busy!”

Using SMS, someone tells her addressee that a person by the name of *Ah Lao* can make it for a game of mahjong and to tell his mother what time the game starts.

他说11.30。阿佬说可以就这样和你妈妈说。

“He said 11.30am. *Ah Lao* said can. Tell your mother like this.”

These examples suggest that Singapore Mandarin speakers routinely get people to do something by asking if they *can* do it. There seems to be an expectation that if it is said that someone can do something, they will do it. Not only that, the use of *kéyǐ* seems to imply that the speaker wants the addressee to do it or that it is somehow

important to the speaker that the addressee does it. On the other hand, if the speaker asks whether the addressee wants to do it, because the addressee is overtly given a choice, the implication could be that, while the speaker would appreciate some help, it is not important whether the addressee agrees to help or not. This means that, in Singapore Mandarin, “can you help me” and “do you want to help me” can have different connotations. The first one, which is more commonly used, sounds causal and friendly, and implies that the speakers are somehow connected. It also implies that the speaker can take the addressee for granted, so to speak, which is a positive value in Singapore Mandarin culture. The second one, which emphasizes what the addressee wants, implies distance between the speakers. It implies that the speaker cannot assume that the addressee is willing to render help, which is not a particularly positive situation from a Singapore Mandarin perspective. It can also mean that, while the speaker needs help, it does not need to come from the addressee.

The speech norm thus points to a collectivist culture, where individual desires are not always overtly emphasized. This, of course, means that, in the Singapore Mandarin cultural context, the Anglo emphasis on one’s personal autonomy is not a particularly high-ranking value. The following examples further illustrate the Singapore Mandarin cultural emphasis on what one can do over what one wants:

Using SMS, someone says that she will ask someone else if he can avail himself for something.

我问他可以吗

“I (will) ask him if he can”

Using SMS, someone asks her addressee if his mother can make it on Saturday to do something with her.

拜六你妈妈可以吗?

“Saturday can your mother (make it)?”

Someone has been asked if a “karaoke” session can be organized at her place. Using SMS, she replies in the affirmative and asks if the addressee wants to invite a mutual friend by the name of *Zhongjie*.

可以呀,你要问钟姐看可以吗?

“Can. You want to ask *Zhongjie* to see whether she can?”

Using SMS, someone tells her addressee about the availability of two persons X and Y for a forthcoming get-together.

X说可以, Y说不可以

“X said can, Y said cannot”

Using SMS, the writer wants the addressee to tell his roommate, who is organizing a game of mahjong the following Sunday, that someone can make it.

和[他]说阿佬礼拜可以. 谢了!

“Tell him *Ah Lao* can on Sunday. Thanks!”

These examples again suggest that, from the Singapore Mandarin perspective, there is a general expectation that if someone can do something, this someone will do it. The following seems to be another example of this expectation. In this example, the ability of someone to do something is clearly the crux of the matter:

Using SMS, someone asks if the addressee’s roommate is able to sit for hours to play mahjong the coming Sunday, given his back problem.

你没问他腰痛礼拜还可以打吗?

“You didn’t ask him if on Sunday he can still play mahjong with a backache?”

Here, the SMS writer seems to assume that the addressee’s roommate will play mahjong despite his backache, if he *can*. She does not ask if the person *wants* to do



it, given the pain. She does not appear to entertain the possibility that he may not want to play mahjong even if he can, and she obviously assumes that if he can, he will.

Interestingly, the cultural importance of the concept of *kéyǐ* in Singapore Mandarin is also evidenced in the expression “什么都可以” (“everything can be” or “whatever,” usually rendered in colloquial Singapore English as “anything also can”), which is said by or can be used to describe someone who is agreeable to anything. In the following example, the SMS writer rather exaggeratedly describes someone who is willing to go out of the way to fetch people as “everything can be”:

Using SMS, someone comments on a friend, an ardent mahjong fan, who is willing to go out of his way to fetch people to his home for mahjong.

受不了[他]昨天他说今天健身好了去载Yvonne你看他有麻将什么都可以而且又不顺路  
“I can’t stand him. Yesterday he said he would fetch Yvonne after gym. If he has mahjong, everything can be (‘is possible’). It’s not even on the way.”

In fact, when someone is given choices, they can use this expression to mean they do not have a preferred choice. It is almost like saying, “anything goes” or “whatever” in English.

Interestingly, some of the examples of use of the Singapore Mandarin *kéyǐ* (“can”) presented so far reflect another cultural trait. They seem to reflect attitudes akin to servitude. People in the sales and service industries, for example, have been attested to use the word, especially with repetition, to reflect alacrity, servitude, and thus good service attitude. Below are examples involving service providers to illustrate this attitude:

A shop assistant asks a visitor what he is looking for. The visitor says he is just browsing, to which the assistant enthusiastically replies:

可以可以

“Can, can” (“it can be like this” or “you can do this”)

A customer has just paid for something but indicates to the shopkeeper that he needs to go away to do something but will be back shortly to collect the item.

Customer: 我待会再来拿 (“I’ll be back shortly to get it”)

Cashier: 可以可以 (“Can, can,” “it can be like this” or “you can do this”)

By responding to what the customer wants with *kéyǐ*, the salesperson reflects her alacrity and obligation to accommodate the customer’s needs, which is considered a hallmark of good salesmanship in Singapore culture. To say ‘*kéyǐ*’ to someone seeking assistance is to show goodwill to this someone. It may thus be considered a kind of cohesive tool and the discourse associated with it a means by which Singapore Mandarin speakers connect on an everyday basis.

Of course, although in this section examples which suggest that speakers are more interested in what one *can* do than what one *wants* to do are examined, it does not mean that Singapore Mandarin speakers are never interested in what others want. They sometimes are, as the following examples show:

Someone has a message for the addressee from the addressee’s roommate. The roommate wants to know if the addressee wants to do something.

他说要问你要不要。

“He said to ask you whether you want to do it.”

Using SMS, someone says that *Ah Lao* is not available for a mahjong game and asks the addressee if someone else should be approached.

我打给阿佬他说不可以,要不要问钟姐?  
 "I called *Ah Lao*, he said can't. Want to ask *Zhongjie*?"

However, the idea is that Singapore Mandarin speakers tend to show more interest in whether people can do something than in whether they want to do it, especially among family members and closer friends. In fact, John Wakefield (personal conversation 2014) suggests that this is a key difference he has noticed between Anglo and Chinese culture. Accordingly, his Hong Kong Cantonese in-laws often speak to him in a way that implies they assume he will do things that they know he can do and they think he should do, without considering whether or not he wants to do those things. Perhaps this could be hypothesized as a universal hallmark of a so-called collectivistic culture, the expectation or presumption that if one can do it, one will. After all, in a collectivistic setting, it is expected that people tend not to see themselves as individuals but extensions of one another (Wong 2007) and priority is thus given to a "collectivistic" want rather than an "individual" want.

### 4.3 *Suggestions, Offers, and Advice*

This section focuses on examples which may, from an Anglo-English perspective, be described as suggestions, offers and advice. When a Singapore Mandarin speaker wants to "suggest" what someone can do or "offer" something to someone, they often frame it in terms of *kéyǐ*. Below are a few preliminary examples:

Using SMS, someone offers to get a takeaway from her addressee, who she is meeting later.  
 需要我帮你打包吗?可以。

"(You) need me to help you get takeaway? Can."

In an SMS message, a school bus driver offers to give the addressee and his roommate a lift to the airport the following Monday, before she goes to work. This is consistent with what the addressee wants.

下个拜一我可以载你们去机场然后才去接德国学生

"Next Monday I can give you a lift to the airport and then take the German students (to school)"

Using SMS, someone tells her addressee, who will visit her soon, that she has bought some food for him.

早上我有买鸡肉包待会可以吃

"This morning I bought some chicken buns, which (you/we) can eat later"

In an SMS message, someone tells the addressee that she can meet him at a particular place anytime to do something.

我几点都可以你要到了再联络我

"I can (do) anytime, let me know when you are about to reach there"

Using SMS, someone, who has been booked for a mahjong session, tells the addressee that if his mother wants to play, she can give up her place and let his mother play because she has other things to do. Note that there are two instances of *kéyǐ* ("can") in this text but it is the first instance that is under discussion.

如果你妈妈拜六要打[的]话我可以给她打,这样我可以去做一点事情

"If your mother wants to play on Saturday, I can let her play. In this way I can go and do something"

The examples suggest that Singapore Mandarin speakers tend not to make offers in the form of questions like Anglo-English speakers often do (e.g., "Would you like

me to...?”). Instead, they tend to simply state what they can do (“I can do this”) for the addressee to consider. Admittedly, this use is also found in Anglo English, but the cultural assumption underlying such Singapore Mandarin examples and the others discussed above seems to be that “if one can do it, one will” or, from the speaker’s perspective, “if you want me to do something and if I can do it, I will do it.” By contrast, as Wakefield (personal conversation) points out, in Anglo English one would expect the corresponding assumptions to be somewhat different: “if one can do it, one will do it if one wants to do it” and “if you want me to do something, I will do it if I can do it and if I want to do it.” The main difference lies in the degree of emphasis on what an individual wants. In Anglo English, what one wants is emphasized, but not in Chinese.

Suggestions are similarly formulated, and below are some examples. The speaker in each instance says what they or the addressee can do as something akin to a suggestion. Despite the ambiguities in the subject in some examples, the message of what one can do is presented to the addressee for consideration or information:

Using SMS, the writer tells the addressee that she may not have a mahjong session the coming Saturday but says it is good, too, because she can rest, which is like a suggestion to herself, as she is talking about a possibility.

拜六如果没脚也好啦可以休息。

“Saturday if there are not enough players, it’ll be good too. (I) can rest.”

Using SMS, someone, half in jest, suggests that the addressee can get his English friend to sing (“karaoke”) a Mandarin song entitled “the moon represents my heart.”

可以叫英国朋友唱月亮代表我的心

“Can tell (your) English friend to sing *the moon represents my heart*.”

Using SMS, someone tells the addressee that she does not know when she will finish her mahjong session but if she finishes early, they can have dinner together:

不懂打到几点如果早的话就可以在联络。

“I don’t know when I’ll finish but if it’s early (I/we) can contact (you/each other)”

In a Japanese restaurant, someone tells his addressee that she can use her hands to eat sushi instead of using the chopsticks which she is reaching out for.

用手也可以。

“Use hands, also can.”

Using SMS, someone, who is in the midst of a mahjong session, invites the addressee to replace her for dinner and says that he can go home right after dinner without the need to wait for them to finish the session. The speaker gives the impression that she has it all planned out.

看你如果要过来吃饭就过来。不必等到我们打完嘛你可以回家。

“If you want to come for dinner, come. You can go home (afterwards) without the need to wait for us to finish.”

Using SMS, someone tells the addressee to rest as he is unwell. The addressee has also just seen an overseas visitor off at the airport.

他走了你就可以回家休息不要吃太油的东西。

“After he leaves you can go home and rest. Don’t eat food that is too oily.”

This last example is particularly telling because the “suggestion” is followed by an imperative. The imperative clearly indicates that the speaker does not take into consideration what the addressee wants.

Obviously, if someone suggests something in terms of *can*, a response can also be similarly formulated, again often without a subject. It is not uncommon for Singapore Mandarin speakers to say the single word *kéyǐ* (“can”) as a positive response

to what the addressee has suggested. It is noted that the uses of “can” exemplified in this section are not characteristic of Anglo English:

Someone has just asked whether 7.20 pm works for her. She replies:

7.20 可以 (“7.20, can”)

Using SMS, the speakers engage in a jovial exchange. The male speaker says that he can be the female speaker’s best man if she finds someone to marry. The female speaker says that it can be like this.

如果你要做伴郎也可以大家一起热闹嘛

“If you want to be the best man, also can (‘it can be like this’); everybody has fun together.”

An important property of *kéyǐ* is that even when the question is not framed in terms of the modal, the response can be framed as such. Here are two examples:

A food stall operator asks her customer in Singapore Mandarin if he wants sauce on his rice and he replies, “*kéyǐ*”.

A: 要淋汁吗? (“Do you want sauce on your rice?”)

B: 可以 (“can”)

Someone wants to offer his guest a drink and asks the guest if he is fine with something cold.

A: 冷水你敢喝吗? (“Cold water, you dare to drink?,” “Is cold water fine?”)

B: 可以 (“can”)

This use is worth noting. Responses are often framed in terms of *kéyǐ* even when the question is not thus formulated. The emphasis on what one can do rather than what one wants seems to be particularly evident in such examples. This way of speaking seems to flout Grice’s maxims of quantity (“be informative”) and relevance; the Singapore Mandarin speaker does not appear to be informative or relevant. However, the mismatch is reconciled by a certain cultural expectation. From the perspective of the one who makes the offer, the cultural expectation seems to be that “if someone says that they can have something, this someone will have it if they can have it.”

Interestingly, one could also say “*kéyǐ*” as a negative but polite response to an offer. This is because it can say something akin to “it can be like this (and nothing needs to be done).” Below are two examples:

In a car, the front seat passenger tries to clear some things on the back seat for someone to sit. This someone, not wanting to trouble the front seat passenger says:

可以, 可以 (“can, can,” “it can be like this”)

A man, collecting some documents from a printer, thanks his colleague for telling him where the printer is. The colleague, implying that there is no need to thank her, says:

可以, 可以 (“can, can,” “it can be like this”)

In these examples, the speaker says “can” to mean “it can be like this,” which given the context, might be translated into Anglo English as “you don’t have to.” The Singapore Mandarin speaker implies that the addressee does not have to do or say anything, and also that things can remain status quo. In the first example, the speaker, not wanting to trouble the front seat passenger, implies that the things can be left there because they do not bother him or he can take care of them himself. He ultimately implies that the front-seat passenger does not have to do it for him. In the next example, the colleague says “can” to imply that it can be that the addressee does not thank her.

#### 4.4 *Assessing/Evaluating Someone/Something*

This section discusses another speech act not uncommonly framed in terms of *kéyǐ*. This speech act may be, for the purposes of this study, loosely described as “evaluation.” It refers to the idea of saying what is good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable. In Singapore Mandarin, one of the ways in which a person expresses his assessment or evaluation of something is to frame it in terms of *kéyǐ*. A positive or nonnegative assessment about someone or something can be framed in terms of *kéyǐ* or sometimes *hái kéyǐ* (还可以, “still can,” which might be translated into English as “it’s still acceptable”):

Using SMS, someone tells her addressee that the CDs she bought recently are acceptable but not great.

那些光碟还可以听不过也不是说好。

“Those CDs still can be listened to but one doesn’t say they’re good.”

In a hair salon, a shampoo person, who is washing a customer’s hair, asks if the water temperature is all right.

水, 可以吗?

“Water, can?” (“Can it be like this?,” “Is the temperature of the water fine?”)

A stall operator has just told a customer about the price of something and asks if the price is acceptable.

可以吗?

“Can?” (“Can it be like this?,” “Is the price acceptable?”)

In Anglo English, something can be good or bad but usually not “can be.” In Singapore Mandarin, something can just be. The examples suggest that the expression means something akin to “acceptable”. The first example is particularly telling. The things referred to are not considered good but they “can be,” which means that they are acceptable. Here are more examples to showcase this use of *kéyǐ*:

Two colleagues meet and engage themselves in a brief exchange.

A: 好吗, 你? (“How are you?”)

B: 可以呀 (“Can”)

Over SMS, the writer, who has been on a losing streak in mahjong, assesses the situation and jokingly says she needs to do something to change her luck.

我看要去转运才可以。

“The way I see it, I need to change my luck. Then it can be.”

Of course, it is not the case that Singapore Chinese speakers do not evaluate something in terms of good or bad. They do sometimes, as this example shows:

Speaker A tells speaker B about how much he is getting as a tuition teacher for a class of students and thinks it is not bad.

A: 不错 *hór* [particle]? (“not bad, don’t you agree?”)

B: 可以 *lā* [particle]. (“can,” “it can be like this”)

In this example, speaker A makes an evaluation of the fee he is getting in terms of “not bad” and tries to solicit speaker B’s agreement. However, interestingly, speaker B, while agreeing with speaker A, reinterprets the assessment in terms of *can*. This means that in Singapore Mandarin, *kéyǐ* (“can”) can in some situations be used in place of “not bad.”

In the examples presented here, it would seem that the speakers are saying that while something is not exceptionally great, it is at least at a level where the speaker finds acceptable. We now see an important speech norm in which Singapore Mandarin speakers give positive or nonnegative assessment of things in terms of *kéyǐ*; if something is acceptable, one could simply say “*kéyǐ*” (“it can be like this”). Thus, it may be said that *kéyǐ* in Singapore Mandarin is also associated with a discourse of assessment or evaluation.

This way of looking at something is, of course, not typical of English. In English, some of these examples would sound exceedingly odd:

Shampoo person to customer: \*Can the water be like this?

Sales assistant to customer: \*Can the price be like this?

A: They pay well, don't they?

B: \*It can be like this.

A: How are you?

B: \*I/It can be like this.

Perhaps it could be said again that the Singapore Mandarin use of *kéyǐ* in evaluation reflects a discourse of pragmatism. In this cultural context, evaluation is not necessarily expressed in terms of good and bad, but in terms of its acceptability, in terms of whether it can be. If something can be, it is good or at least not bad.

## 5 The Cultural Importance of the Mandarin *kéyǐ*

So far, examples of the Singapore Mandarin *kéyǐ* have been presented to showcase its varied uses and thus its cultural significance. Although the focus of this chapter concerns the Singapore Mandarin *kéyǐ*, it seems that the word is generally a culturally important one in Standard Mandarin. It seems that Standard Mandarin speakers in general tend to interpret many things around them in terms of *can* or what can be. The word, in the form of the bound character 可 (*ké*) in Standard Mandarin, translatable into “-able” in some instances, collocates and combines with a number of words to form a host of compound words and phrases. Many of these compound expressions function like adjectives and are used to describe people or things. Here are some two-character combinations and their translational equivalents in English. The English translations should be seen as approximations and not semantic equivalents:

可爱 (*kèài*) “can love,” “lovely”

可悲 (*kébēi*) “can sorrow,” “sorrowful”

可耻 (*kéchǐ*) “can shame,” “shameful”

可靠 (*kěkào*) “can lean,” “dependable”

可怜 (*kělián*) “can pity,” “pitiful”

可怕 (*képà*) “can fear,” “scary”

可恶 (*kèwù*) “can hate/loathe,” “detestable”

可笑 (*kéxiào*) “can laugh” “can be laughed at,” “laughable”

可惜 (*kéxī*) “can regret,” “regrettable”

可疑 (*kéyí*) “can suspect,” “suspicious”

Presumably, to define some of these combinations in the form of a paraphrase, one would need to rely on the concept *can*. For example, 可笑 (“laughable”) could mean something (in part) like “people can laugh at this.” Below are further examples of how some of these words may be (partially) defined:

- 可悲 (“sorrowful”) ≈  
 something very bad happened  
 if someone thinks about it,  
 this someone can feel something very bad about it
- 可爱 (“lovely”) ≈  
 if someone thinks about this thing,  
 this someone can feel something good towards this thing
- 可怜 (“pitiful”) ≈  
 something bad happened to this person  
 if someone knows about it,  
 this someone can want to do something good for this person
- 可疑 (“suspicious”) ≈  
 someone did something bad  
 people do not know who did it  
 at the same time, people can think like this about someone:  
 maybe this someone did it

These are not meant to be full definitions but rather proposed partial definitions to illustrate how the meaning of the word *ké* (“can”) may manifest itself in the definitions of these expressions.

It should be added that the present author does not suggest at this stage that all these combinations can be defined in terms of *can*. Only semantic analysis can establish this. However, the fact that the Chinese word form *ké* can be used in these many combinations to turn words into adjectives is telling. It suggests that the word is a culturally significant one.

The cultural importance of the Mandarin *ké* is also evident in the ease with which it combines with some other words to form longer phrases. Examples of such phrases include the following:

- 可大可小 “can big can small,” “potentially serious”  
 可歌可泣 “can sing can cry,” “moving, capable of evoking praise and tears”  
 可造之材 “a material that can be used to make things,” “a potential talent”  
 可喜可贺 “can joy can congratulate,” “joyous, worthy of being congratulated”  
 和蔼可亲 “harmonious, can be close,” “amiable”  
 面目可憎 “face eyes, can hate,” “repulsive looks”  
 不可理喻 “cannot reason,” “impervious to reason, unreasonable”  
 可望而不可即 “can see but cannot reach,” “unattainable”

Interestingly, it could be mentioned that the drink *Coca Cola* is translated into Mandarin as 可口可乐 (*kékǒu kělè*; “can mouth, can fun” or “tasty, fun”). Similarly, *Pepsi Cola* is 百事可乐 (*bǎishè kělè*; “hundred things, can fun” or “fun in everything”). *Cola* is simply *kělè* (“can fun”). It would seem that these examples about *Coca Cola* and *Pepsi Cola* are particularly telling. Such words originate in English. When they are lexicalized in Chinese, the word *kě* (“can”) is introduced but the choice of *kě* would seem irrelevant to the English concepts *Coca Cola* and *Pepsi Cola*.

The examples suggest that the word *kě* or *kéyǐ* is an important word in Mandarin and can be considered a cultural keyword because of the many ways in which it is used. The word can tell us something about how its speakers think and view the world around them. It suggests that its speakers, in general, and Singapore Mandarin speakers, in particular, have a tendency to view things in terms of *can*—whether one can do something, something can eventuate, or something is acceptable, among others.

## 6 Some Singapore Mandarin Attitudes and Tendencies

The data presented in this chapter suggest that, in Singapore Mandarin culture, what one can or cannot do and what can or cannot be are important considerations in everyday life, such as when one tries to get someone to do something, tells someone what they can do, agrees to do something for someone, supports someone's suggestion, and assesses something. In terms of cultural importance, these considerations seem to outrank considerations about what one wants. It is proposed that the tendency for these speech acts to be expressed in terms of *kéyǐ* reflects certain attitudes. In this section, some of these tendencies and attitudes are discussed and stated in the form of NSM cultural scripts, with the further objective of formulating hypotheses about how Singapore Mandarin speakers think. To highlight the culture specificity of these Singapore Mandarin scripts, some corresponding Anglo-English scripts are also proposed.

In Singapore Mandarin, when a person wants someone to do something, one of the first things that come to mind seems to be whether this someone can do it. The question asked (“can you do this” or “can it be like this: you do this” in Mandarin) reflects the expectation or presumption that if the addressee can do it, they will do it. It is proposed that such an attitude may be represented by the following cultural script:

A Singapore Mandarin attitude on getting someone to do something  
when I want someone to do something, I can think about this someone like this:  
“if this person can do it, this person will do it”

By contrast, a corresponding Anglo-English script might look like this:

An Anglo English attitude on getting someone to do something  
when I want someone to do something, I can think about this someone like this:  
“if this person can do it, this person will do it if they want to do it”

When being asked to do something by someone, one can frame one's response in terms of *kéyǐ*. This suggests a kind of obligatory attitude on the part of the one being approached to do something. It suggests that there is an ideal which says that if one can do something, then one should do it. This Singapore Mandarin ideal or attitude may be represented by the following cultural script:

A general Singapore Mandarin attitude on doing something for someone  
when someone wants me to do something, if I can do it, it will be good if I do it



The corresponding Anglo-English script might look something like this:

A general Anglo English attitude on doing something for someone  
when someone wants me to do something, if I can do it,  
it will be good if I do it if I want to do it

Obviously, this Anglo-English script reflects an ideal. As Wakefield (personal conversation) points out, there can be instances in which an Anglo person might feel obliged to do something for a friend even if they did not want to, out of obligation. However, it seems that even in such a situation, the helper and the beneficiary would most likely not refer to the event as if the helper did it out of obligation.

The two Singapore Mandarin cultural scripts are complementary in that one is associated with the asker and the other with the addressee. The first script reflects a kind of expectation or presumption and the second one a kind of obligation. These proposed scripts tell us that for Singapore Mandarin speakers, doing things for people when one can is an expectation and is perceived to be a value. This kind of expectation is, of course, not associated with Anglo-English speakers. Anglo-English speakers, on the whole, avoid sounding presumptuous and try to be mindful of the addressee’s personal autonomy when asking for favors, as the two Anglo-English scripts try to show.

While in English it is not uncommon for people to make offers in the form of questions, in Singapore Mandarin an “offer” could be a statement framed as “I can do something.” As long as the context makes it clear that it is a kind of “offer,” one does not have to say anything else. Admittedly, this way of speaking could also be found in Anglo English but arguably it does not constitute a script because it does not seem to be as salient as it is in Singapore Mandarin. There is no linguistic evidence found at this stage to suggest that the word *can* is culturally salient in Anglo English:

A common Singapore Mandarin way of making an “offer”  
when I want someone to know I will do something for this someone if they want,  
I can say something like this to this person:  
“it can be like this: I do this” (“can” of possibility)  
I don’t have to say anything else

When a Singapore Mandarin speaker wants the addressee to consider doing something, the speaker could say something like this in Mandarin, “you can do this.” The speech act may be represented in this way:

A Singapore Mandarin “suggestion” or “advice”  
when someone says something like, “you can do this,”  
this someone can want to say something like this,  
“I think that you don’t know that  
it can be like this: you do this (‘can’ of possibility)  
I want you to know that it can be like this  
I want you to know that it’ll be good if it can be like this”

By contrast, according to Wakefield (personal conversation), in Anglo English it means something different because “Anglo English speakers don’t like to be spoken to as if they don’t already know what is good for them.” He proposes the following script to represent the Anglo-English interpretation of “you can do this.” It seems

to me that one difference between the two scripts is that in the Singapore Mandarin case the *can* of possibility is referred to, while in Anglo English, it is the *can* of ability:

An Anglo English interpretation of “you can do this”  
 when someone says, “you can do this,”  
 this someone can want to say something like this,  
 “I think that you want to do something  
 I think that you don’t know that you can do it (‘can’ of ability)  
 I want you to know that you can do it”

When evaluating something, the Singapore Mandarin speaker has the option of phrasing the evaluation in terms of *kéyǐ*, if only to express acceptability. The word could mean (roughly) anything from “barely acceptable” to “good.” The speech norm, which is not found in Anglo English, may be stated in this way:

A Singapore Mandarin way of evaluation  
 if I want to say something is not bad,  
 I can say something like this about it: “it can be like it is”

The cultural scripts presented in this section attempt to describe some of the attitudes and speech norms associated with the Singapore Mandarin *kéyǐ*. Given that *kéyǐ* appears to be ubiquitous in Singapore Mandarin, it might be hypothesized that these cultural scripts are important in Singapore Mandarin culture, and their formulations can help cultural outsiders understand aspects of the culture, especially for the purposes of cultural adaptation.

These cultural scripts are also important from a language pedagogic perspective. It is noticed that some of these Singapore Mandarin ways of speaking have found their way into Singapore English, commonly known as Singlish (Wong 2014). For example, the following Singlish exchanges are not uncommonly heard:

A: Want to meet for breakfast tomorrow?  
 B: Can.  
 A: 3.30 to 4[pm]?  
 B: Can, can.

Obviously, such uses of “can” are not Standard English. For an English teacher to help a Singlish-speaking student to learn Standard English, it would be helpful for the teacher to understand the cultural factors and so-called first-language interference that motivate the student to use the English *can* in non-Standard English ways. It would also help students to understand the different ways of using “can” in Singlish and in Standard English.

## 7 Concluding Remarks

Although studies suggest that *can* is a lexical and semantic universal, the ways this word is used in any language are evidently not all universal. The study of the Mandarin semantic equivalent of *can* in Singapore Mandarin reveals some language-specific patterns of use which are not typical of Anglo English.

While in Anglo English, an important cultural consideration is what one wants, in Singapore Mandarin, an important consideration is what one can do. This could explain why in Singapore Mandarin speech acts conventionally termed “requests,” “suggestions” and “offers” are often framed in terms of *kéyǐ*, the Mandarin semantic counterpart of “can,” with people routinely saying things to mean “X can do it” and “it can be like this: X does it.” The formulation “it can be like this” is even more ubiquitous and can be used in situations where one would thank someone or stop someone from doing something, and in some forms of evaluations. All these ways of speaking suggest that *kéyǐ* is a cultural keyword of Singapore Mandarin. Understanding the use of *kéyǐ* in Singapore Mandarin has implications for cross-cultural communication and English language teaching in the cultural context of Singapore.

Lastly, this chapter showcases the use of English NSM to study speech acts in a non-English language. It shows that we do not, in fact, need to rely on conventional English speech-act words, which are mostly ethnocentric, to study Singapore Mandarin speech acts.

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# Collectivism and Coercion: The Social Practice of ‘Sharing’ and Distinctive Uses of the Verb ‘Share’ in Contemporary Singapore

Brian Poole

**Abstract** In the context of contemporary Singapore, this chapter investigates the social practice of ‘sharing’ (particularly in white-collar workplace settings) and distinctive uses of the verb ‘share’. It is argued that both should be understood in relation to what might be called the dominant discourse in Singapore, a worldview largely shaped and promoted by the People’s Action Party (PAP), which has formed the government from independence onwards. Some features of this dominant discourse are highlighted, including certain keywords and conceptual metaphors, all of which, it is argued, point towards a collectivist outlook, in which the needs and wants of the individual are subordinated to the requirements of the nation, as specified by the PAP. It is concluded that the various phenomena described are best understood by taking into account the collectivism or paternalism of the ruling party and that, in essence, the force exerted by the dominant discourse amounts to a form of coercion. Finally, it is suggested that further research in the area by ‘insider’ researchers or by those from other theoretical perspectives, such as those using natural semantic metalanguage as an analytic framework, might prove fruitful.

**Keywords** Verb ‘share’ · Pragmatics and culture · Lexical pragmatics · Singapore

## 1 Introduction

In this chapter, I look at the social practice of ‘sharing’ and at certain distinctive uses of the verb ‘share’ in Singapore. I seek to locate these within the bigger picture of Singapore seen as a society with collectivist tendencies, ruled by a political elite whose discourse typically draws on conceptual metaphors which cluster around notions such as ‘home’, ‘family’, and ‘team’. I shall argue that this discourse (which, through a largely compliant media and long-term rule by a single political party, can be called a ‘dominant discourse’) is so pervasive in Singapore that it is assimilated

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subliminally by large numbers of people and therefore exerts a considerable influence on social practices and public attitudes. The term ‘discourse’ is used here in the sense of ‘a body of ideas, concepts and beliefs which become established as knowledge or as an accepted world view’ (Bilton et al. 1996, p. 657), and by ‘dominant discourse’ I mean that set of ideas, concepts, and beliefs which is most frequently encountered in public life and in the media. The social and linguistic phenomena described in this chapter are seen here as particular examples of ways in which the dominant collectivist discourse works itself out in everyday contexts, such as those of the school classroom and the white-collar workplace.

I should also say something about myself as an interpreter of the phenomena I describe here. In the social sciences, a distinction is often made between the researcher as insider and as outsider (see, for instance, Sherif 2001) and there are clearly advantages and disadvantages to each of these positions. I am a British person who has lived in Singapore for a total of 5 years and I do not speak or understand any of the languages used in that country other than English. Clearly, therefore, I am an outsider. From that perspective, certain phenomena (both linguistic and social) may strike me as worthy of note because they do not conform to norms operating in Britain, or in other countries where I have lived and worked for substantial periods (such as Oman and Russia). The same phenomena may seem unexceptional, and therefore remain almost invisible, to Singaporeans themselves. Yet, at the same time, they (as insiders) would potentially be able to offer explanations of the roots and connotations of particular linguistic and social conventions if these were explicitly drawn to their attention. I shall return to the question of the outsider view (and its pitfalls) in the concluding section.

## 2 The Wider Context

Before proceeding to finer detail, I think that it is essential to provide the reader with a wider context within which this should be seen. Specific examples of language use, behaviour, or attitudes can only be interpreted when broader theoretical, historical, sociological, and political factors have been described.

### 2.1 *Structure and Agency*

The issue of the nature of the relationship between structure and agency, and of the ways in which these interact, has long been at the centre of social theory (see, for example, Archer 2000). Societies are collections of individuals, and each individual has the potential to behave in idiosyncratic ways. On the other hand, each society imposes certain rules and creates and sustains certain expectations about norms for the behaviour of individuals. Thus, structure and agency can be seen as being in constant interaction and struggle, with one a force for conformity and the other

a force for creativity, spontaneity, and heterogeneity. ‘People create and yet are created by the society in which they live’, as Burr (1995, p. 6) puts it, and indeed many current social theorists appear to see structure and agency as being in constant friction, one against the other, since it would be simplistic to regard individuals as entirely formed by the society they belong to, or to argue that societies are derived in some simple and direct way solely from the attributes and behaviours of their members. The position I adopt here might, nevertheless, be seen as closer to the former position than to the latter.

The term ‘society’ though, quite obviously, central to sociological research, can be understood and operationalised in a variety of ways. For instance, as Urry (2000, p. 7) points out (with examples), the term is defined rather differently by ethnomethodologists, Marxists, and feminists (among others). He also argues that for many sociologists the term ‘society’ shows overlapping meaning with the term ‘nation-state’. In this chapter, the phenomena discussed certainly relate to the nation-state Singapore, but should be seen most pertinently, I would argue, as features of Singaporean society. By this, I mean that the actions and attitudes described here are best seen as shaped or conditioned by the worldview of Singapore’s social and political elite.

## 2.2 *Historical Background*

Before proceeding to exemplification and analysis of the relevant social and linguistic phenomena, it may be helpful to sketch in a little historical and political background detail which should be of benefit to readers who are unfamiliar with Singapore, and which may be regarded as constituting one important facet of the conditions under which characteristic social practices and particular uses of language have evolved.

With the exception of the 1942–1945 period, when it was occupied by the Japanese during the Second World War, Singapore (as part of the Straits Settlement) was under the *de facto* control of the British from the early nineteenth century until the declaration of independence of 1963, under which it became part of the new federation of Malaysia. However, this state of affairs did not persist, largely due to the political and social friction generated among Chinese Singaporeans by the federal government’s promulgation of a policy of positive discrimination for Malays, and, as distrust grew between the state and federal governments, Singapore found itself forced out of the federation in 1965.

In the last days of their colonial power, the British gravely doubted the viability of Singapore as a nation state. They had only agreed to relinquish their hold over Singapore if independence occurred in the context of a wider non-Communist, non-Chinese-dominated Malaysia (Gopinathan 2013). Nevertheless, they, together with Australia and the USA, were amongst the first to recognize the new state. However, Singapore’s future as a very small nation (scarcely larger in land area than, say, Saint Lucia in the Windward Islands, with high levels of unemployment and few natural resources) continued to be widely questioned.

### 2.3 *The Singapore Story*

As is well known, Singapore has in fact now become one of the wealthiest nations in the world, as measured in gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (as can be demonstrated through statistics from such bodies as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund). How this remarkable transformation came about is a matter for historians, economists, and political scientists to debate, but among the many forms of evidence which might be examined in order to reach a conclusion, I shall mention just two. Since Lee Kuan Yew was Singapore's Prime Minister from 1959 to 1990 (and even thereafter remained a significant power behind the throne as 'Senior Minister' from 1990 to 2004 and then 'Minister Mentor' from 2004 to 2011), most observers acknowledge his pivotal position in Singapore's rise. It would surely be in order, therefore, to study his account of how it all happened. However, as Tan (2007) wisely points out, it is telling that the subtitle of Lee's (2000) book *From Third World to First* is 'The Singapore Story'. This may give rise in some minds to a second way of looking at Singapore's rise: examining the 'story' which has been constructed by the ruling elite and which is now passed down, through schooling, to the present-day Singaporean children for whom full independence in 1965 is today as distant in time as the Second Battle of the Somme was for American youngsters at the time of the Apollo 11 moon landing.

Tan (2007, p. 294) lists various publications and other resources which disseminate this national 'story' and, in addition, proclaim that 'building a nation out of a racially divided immigrant population and providing security and material benefits for all became the PAP's primary purpose and in fact its *raison d'être*'. In a foreword to a critical examination of 'accepted' versions of Singapore's history by Hong and Huang (2008), Singaporean sociologist Chua Beng Huat recognizes that 'a nation needs ideological underpinnings' and that 'an obvious starting point' in seeking to provide such underpinnings 'is to "explain" how Singapore gets to its first world economy in a world where postcolonial societies flounder' (2008, p. ix). He concludes his foreword by seeing Singapore's national history as 'an open terrain for contestation' and by asking in what other ways that history could be written, including perhaps by those observing or analyzing from alternative perspectives. One can begin to glimpse here a nascent discursive struggle between the 'official' (Lee Kuan Yew or PAP) account of Singapore's recent history, transmitted through schools, the media, and the speeches and writings of mainstream politicians, and alternative interpretations of it. It is a struggle in which, at the present time, the dominant discourse continues to have the upper hand. As Chua rightly observes, thinking and writing about such matters 'is unavoidably ideological and political' (2008, p. x).

Clearly, the purpose of this chapter is not to examine the recent history of Singapore, nor to examine the various accounts provided of it by scholars or by prominent actors within it, such as Lee Kuan Yew. However, it should be recognized that Singapore, as a very young nation, thrust suddenly into complete independence, has had to construct for itself, or to have constructed for it, by its political leadership, an account of how it came to be, and of what makes it distinctive. In order to promote



national cohesion, there must always be a need for something more than a flag and an anthem; there is a need to persuade citizens, if incrementally over time, that the new nation is viable and, more than that, that its existence is something to be proud of. In the case of Singapore, with its population consisting of three major ethnic groups (75% Chinese, 15% Malay and 8% Indian in 1970), this was potentially tricky in the years following independence. Part of the solution adopted by the ruling PAP has been to develop a collectivist discourse which emphasizes the greater good of the nation over the needs and wants of the individual citizen, and which draws on motifs such as ‘family’, ‘home’, and working as a ‘team’. It is in that wider sociopolitical context that the much more specific issues around ‘share’ and sharing, which form the basis of this chapter, will be discussed.

## 2.4 *Asian Values and Confucianism*

Scholarly consideration of the ‘mood music’ created by the PAP in seeking to build a nation and to inspire its citizens to work hard and be law-abiding has often focused on two related notions: Asian values (Emmerson 1995) and Confucianism (Kuah 1990). The idea of ‘Asian values’ has also frequently been alluded to by Lee Kuan Yew. For example, in his 1978 national day speech (cited by Hill 2000, p. 185) he emphasized the need for ‘strong assertion of the Asian values common to all Singapore’s ethnic groups, stressing the virtues of individual subordination to the community’. Not all scholarly observers of Singapore have, however, been convinced that ‘Asian values’ of this sort can be said to exist. After all, for many political geographers, the whole of the Arabian Peninsula (Western Asia) is part of the continent, while approximately three quarters of Russia (east of the Urals) is similarly regarded. What values do the inhabitants of Novosibirsk have in common with those of Riyadh, one might ask, apart from values subscribed to by all humanity? At least one key PAP politician from the decades immediately after independence was skeptical. S. Rajaratnam, Singapore’s first Foreign Minister and later a Deputy Prime Minister, stated at a 1977 conference on ‘Asian values and modernization’ that he had ‘very serious doubts as to whether such a thing as ‘Asian values’ really exists...so were I to talk about Asian values I would be talking about nothing in particular’ (see Barr 2002, p. 31). Perhaps the term seems a little more credible, although semantically less precise, if it is taken to mean ‘values characteristic of East and Southeast Asian cultures’, as Hill (2000, p. 178) suggests.

The place of Confucianism within PAP discourse is also somewhat difficult to pin down. According to Wong and Wong (1989, p. 517), before 1979 it ‘was not even a topic for public discussion in Singapore’. In 1982, however, ‘religious knowledge was introduced in the school curriculum, and Confucian Ethics was a much-touted option’ (Hong and Huang 2008, p. 217). What had happened, according to Kuo (1992) was that, after several sleepless nights of thought, the then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew had decided that Confucian Ethics should be offered to ‘those Chinese who might not be religiously inclined’. Much later, in an interview with a journalist (Jacobson 2010), Lee Kuan Yew reflected that:

We used to teach in the schools in the 1980s to get back some moral values as a result of Westernisation, Confucian culture as a subject in itself for the Chinese whereupon the Malays, the Indians and so on, they reacted. They wanted not Confucian culture, they wanted their religion, so we decided we'll stop this. So we took the concepts of Confucianism and put it into civic subject, that society is more important than the individual, that the individual must care for the society and the interests of the society must take precedence over the individual, which is contrary to the American or Western system which says the individual trumps everything, freedom trumps everything, freedom of speech, freedom of whatever you tolerate even at the expense of making others feel inconvenient.

It is not difficult to see that Lee Kuan Yew's characterization of, on the one hand, Asian values ('stressing the virtues of individual subordination to the community') and, on the other, Confucianism ('the individual must care for the society and the interests of the society must take precedence over the individual') have much in common. For Singapore's political leaders from the mid 1960s onwards, when national economic prospects seemed uncertain and race riots (1964) were fresh in the memory, it is quite conceivable that precepts concerning selflessness and devotion to the greater national good seemed highly appropriate as the stuff of political discourse and of school education.

Today, Singapore is often described in terms which emphasize the top-down nature of its governance, where 'top' refers, implicitly or explicitly, to the PAP, and especially to its leading members. In April 2012, Singapore's ambassador to the USA, Chan Heng Chee, described Singapore's rule as characterized by 'soft authoritarianism'.<sup>1</sup> Alternatively, the Singaporean government is frequently regarded as 'paternalistic' (for instance, see Low 2006) and, to the extent that numerous scholars and observers see this characterization as appropriate, this suggests that the autonomy of the individual is at least to some extent reduced under the influence of such 'father leadership' (Low 2006). My argument here is that the national pledge and the five shared values, both crafted by the ruling PAP, and briefly discussed in the section 'Collectivism', are examples of a top-down paternalism at work in Singapore which seeks to instil a collectivist ethos. In the social practice of 'sharing' and in certain distinctive ways in which the verb 'share' is used in Singapore, we catch a glimpse, I would argue, of the way the PAP's 'mood music' (pervasive discourse, introduced both overtly and more subtly into the national consciousness) influences the linguistic and social behaviour of ordinary Singaporeans.

### 3 Metaphors and Motifs in PAP Discourse

I have argued above that the emphasis on Asian values and on Confucianism reflects the PAP's need to downplay the concerns of the individual and to stress the importance of national togetherness. I shall now seek to show how this PAP mindset reveals itself in particular rhetorical motifs and metaphors, notably those relating to

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.thedp.com/index.php/article/2012/04/singapore\\_ambassador\\_discusses\\_politics\\_in\\_huntsman](http://www.thedp.com/index.php/article/2012/04/singapore_ambassador_discusses_politics_in_huntsman).

'family', 'home', and 'team', which can be observed in speeches by political leaders and in Singapore's mainstream print and broadcast media, which are generally subservient to the PAP and its doctrines.

### 3.1 *Family*

The first such motif I shall examine is that of 'family'. The notion of family is important in PAP discourse in two distinct, but related, ways: firstly, because, in a literal way, 'the family is enshrined in official discourse as the basic unit of society' (Tan 2001, p. 95), and secondly because the notion of 'family' is used metaphorically when referring to Singapore and Singaporeans. Let us consider these aspects of 'family' in turn.

In PAP discourse, references to the biological family form part of the emphasis on the importance of groups of people, communities, and ultimately the nation as a whole, rather than on the needs and wants of the individual. Singapore's government encourages organisations to apply to be *family life ambassadors*, and the application involves a pledge, the first part of which is shown below:

As a Family Life Ambassador we pledge to be a partner in building strong and stable families in Singapore. We acknowledge that the Singapore Family is the basic building block of our society. We believe that strong families are our foundation and our future, and that it is the responsibility of each and every Singaporean to play a part in bringing about strong and stable families in Singapore.

Not surprisingly, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong often publicly relays the same message: 'To be a resilient society, we need strong and close families' (2005, on-line<sup>2</sup>) and (in the Singapore parliament in October 2007):

The family is the basic building block of this society. And by family in Singapore we mean one man, one woman, marrying, having children and bringing up children within that framework of a stable family unit.

As Chong (2005, p. 284) points out, such is the 'ideological hegemony of the Singapore state' that civic organizations 'concerned with social issues such as family well-being' echo the perspective of the Prime Minister and 'have firm ideas on what constitutes a family unit'. In other words, the paternalistic state (or the PAP) exerts a strong top-down influence on the views and attitudes of the populace as a whole.

Regarding metaphorical uses of 'family' in PAP discourse, it can, of course, be pointed out that this conceptual metaphor (which, following the practice of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), can be rendered in the upper case as FAMILY IS NATION) is common not just in Singapore, and not only as realized in the English language used in Singapore. Think, for instance, of expressions (in English or other languages) such as 'mother Russia' or 'the fatherland', or, in the US context, of references to 'Uncle Sam' or the 'founding fathers'. All these expressions and others, such as 'Big Brother' as the embodiment of the totalitarian state in Orwell's '1984', arise from the idea of the nation as a family, with the ruling elite assuming the role of

<sup>2</sup> See [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2005-02/08/content\\_2561604.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2005-02/08/content_2561604.htm).

parent or older sibling, and assigning the role of offspring or younger children to the mass of the population.

We may also see the idea of the paternalistic state, a term sometimes used to describe Singapore, as an instance of this conceptual metaphor, in which the ruling elite, in this case the PAP and, in particular, its most influential members, exercises fatherly care and discipline over the citizens, who are seen as offspring not entirely able to direct their own lives, and therefore in need of guidance. As Jones and Brown (1994, p. 83) point out, in Singapore the government has always tended to emphasize paternalism as one of the main themes of the state's ideology.

As we have seen, the dominant discourse in Singapore is that promulgated by the PAP, which has held the reins of power in the country since independence. Dominant discourses constitute the principal means through which powerful groups seek to control or subjugate the mass of the people and this, broadly, is one of the messages of Foucault (1977), and of Fairclough (for example, 2001). Fairclough (1989, p. 86) furnishes the powerful generalization that 'there is a constant endeavour on the part of those who have power to impose an ideological common sense which holds for everyone'. This is done, I would argue, in order to create and sustain attitudes among the general public which are unlikely to lead to any challenge to the status quo. In Singapore, the dominant discourse purveyed by the PAP through its representatives, such as successive Prime Ministers, ministers, and MPs, with the assistance of an acquiescent media, is encountered so frequently by the mass of the population that for many it is absorbed subliminally, and appears to be nothing more than the 'common sense' referred to by Fairclough (1989) above. Unquestioned assumptions are created in this way, which underpin attitudes and behaviours, including social practices. The present discussion of PAP rhetorical motifs and metaphors (such as those of 'family', 'home', and 'team') and, below, of the distinctive use in Singapore's 'share' and of the social practice of sharing is situated within this wider understanding of the roles and effects of dominant discourses in societies as a whole.

Metaphorical uses of 'family' by PAP figures occur with some frequency in public utterances. For instance, the current Prime Minister, Lee Hsien Loong, included the following passage in his 2013 Chinese New Year message:

As we celebrate Chinese New Year, let us spare a thought for those who are going through difficult times, such as the less fortunate or families who have recently lost loved ones. If you can, reach out to them and invite them to your celebrations. They are all part of our larger Singapore family.

Later in 2013 (on 7th July), the Prime Minister used other family-related terms, arguing in a speech that 'the red in the Singapore flag means universal brotherhood', and 2 weeks later (on 21st July) he suggested that 'the Singapore story has always been one of opportunity, hope, and diversity, ever since...our forefathers left their homelands'. Commenting in October 2012 on a case in which apparently racist views had been expressed, Law Minister K. Shanmugam (himself ethnically Indian) repeated remarks he had made in the Singapore parliament in 2002, to the effect that Singaporeans 'should...ask what the attitudes of non-Malays are towards our Malay brothers and sisters'. All these metaphorical references to 'family' and to various family members may be understood as characteristics of a PAP discourse

which attempts, sometimes overtly and sometimes covertly, to encourage coherence and racial harmony within the new and ethnically diverse nation.

### 3.2 *Home*

References to Singapore as ‘home’ abound in speeches by key PAP politicians and on government websites. A National Day Parade (NDP) is held in Singapore every year in August to commemorate separation from Malaysia. In 2012, the theme of the parade was ‘Loving Singapore, Our Home’. On the Singapore Ministry of Defence website (April 25, 2012) the Chairman of the 2012 NDP executive committee offered comments on how ‘the theme can rally Singaporeans to love their home’, expressing the hope that the 2012 celebration and its theme would ‘rekindle that warmth and affection for our own home’. Later in 2012 (8 December), Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said in a speech at the Economic Society of Singapore Annual Dinner that ‘With imagination and hard work, we can turn vision into reality, and ensure that Singapore continues to be the best home for us all’.

The Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs refers on its website to ‘Singapore’s Home Team’, explaining that this term is used to describe the agglomeration formed when all its ‘departments and statutory boards are united as partners’. Speaking at the International Conference on Terrorist Rehabilitation and Community Resilience in March 2013, Prime Minister Lee stated that Singapore had not suffered a terrorist attack in recent years and he commended the ‘Home Team’ for keeping Singapore safe.

The use of the word ‘home’ in such contexts is not, it must be accepted, restricted to Singapore: for example, the UK interior ministry has the title ‘Home Office’. However, references by politicians and other prominent Singaporean individuals to Singapore as ‘home’ seem more persistent in that country than in longer established nations with English as an official language. Singapore’s government in 2012 set up a ‘national conversation’ in which all citizens were invited to identify national priorities and set out their hopes for the future. In a speech at Lasalle College on 26th September 2012, Singapore’s Education Minister, Heng Swee Keat, spoke of a vision for Singapore as ‘A home of hope, a home with heart and a home we love’. Later, in the same speech he also spoke of ‘our sense of belonging, our sense of togetherness’, thus making clear that the emphasis on Singapore as ‘home’ is, like references to the ‘Singapore family’, a rhetorical device designed to reinforce societal cohesion.

### 3.3 *Team*

The Singapore Ministry of Manpower<sup>3</sup> declares that it operates based on ‘four shared values of People Centredness, Professionalism, Teamwork, and Passion for

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.mom.gov.sg/aboutus/Pages/vision-mission-values.aspx>.

Progress', a formulation which combines both an emphasis on 'sharing' (for another reference to 'shared values' see the section 'Collectivism') and on working as a team. References to 'the PAP team', whether in relation to the government, to the cabinet, or to the party as a whole, and to the idea of teamwork at community level or in the workplace, are frequently found in the Singapore media. For instance, references to 'Singapore's Home Team' (discussed in the section 'Home') encapsulate two conceptual metaphors commonly encountered in the dominant (PAP) discourse: both 'home' and 'team'. Prominently displayed on the website of the Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs<sup>4</sup> we find the declaration, comprising one sentence and one fragment: 'We are Singapore's Home Team. Multiplicity of purpose but one shared mission'.

Such examples provide a basis for suggesting that allusions to the notions of 'team' and 'teamwork' are quite frequent in the discourse of the managing elite in Singapore. However, as Stott and Low (2000), pp. 106–107) point out in a discussion of the relationship, in Singapore, between school principals and their teaching staff, in an ideal team, issues can be debated and any team-member can raise suggestions or quibble with existing orthodoxies. By contrast, Stott and Low state that, in their study, 'principals did at least feel that teachers could disagree or challenge their ideas, but whether teachers felt the same way is a matter for conjecture', and they go on to say that 'if all this implies an element of fear... then that would not be far off the mark'. In their view (admittedly some years ago) principals felt the need, above all, to be seen as 'good' by the Ministry of Education, while teachers avoided any contradiction of, or disagreement with, the principal. What they describe, in the school context, sounds much more like hierarchical rule than genuine teamwork.

The presence of motifs such as family, home, and team in the dominant discourse can certainly be seen as reflecting a collectivist outlook, to which we turn below, but it might also be seen as exerting a coercive effect on the mass of the Singapore population: the rank and file, ordinary people who lead their lives at the base of the social pyramid, rather than at its apex. For them, injunctions about teamwork from government ministers or other senior public figures may be interpreted as a form of coded advice in which the 'real' message is that it is best to think, act, and speak in a similar fashion to everyone else. The danger then, however, is that, like members of a soccer team all wearing shirts, shorts, and socks of the same colour, they may, to the observer, become indistinguishable one from another.

### 3.4 *Collectivism*

The notion of collectivism (see also Wong, this volume) is frequently noted in scholarly work on Chinese or Chinese-influenced societies, such as Singapore's, in which approximately three quarters of citizens are ethnically Chinese. As long ago as the mid-nineteenth century, Mill (1969 edition, p. 130) referred to 'the Chinese

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.mha.gov.sg/overview.aspx?pageid=187&secid=28>.

ideal of making all people alike’, and this view is also reflected in more recent work which places the Chinese outlook firmly towards one end of the individualism–collectivism spectrum (see, for instance, Bond et al. 1985; Yum 1988; Earley 1993). Probably the most renowned proponent of this sort of view is Hofstede (for example, Hofstede 1991). Based on research into the ‘national culture’ of more than 70 countries worldwide, Hofstede’s website describes the Singaporean culture very much in terms of Confucian philosophy and collectivist tendencies:

One of the key principles of Confucian teaching is the stability of society, which is based on unequal relationships between people.

Singapore... is a collectivistic society. This means that the ‘We’ is important, people belong to in-groups (families, clans or organisations) who look after each other in exchange for loyalty. Here we can also see the second key principle of the Confucian teaching: The family is the prototype of all social organizations.

Hofstede’s work has been criticised as taking a view of culture which, by virtue of its operation at the level of whole nations, is prone to ‘reductionist overgeneralization’ (Holliday 1999, p. 237). Nevertheless, the examination of Singapore’s national pledge and five shared values seems to reveal sentiments in keeping with Hofstede’s view of Singapore as collectivist.

The national pledge of Singapore was written soon after independence in the mid-1960s. It is spoken in unison by groups of people congregating at important public events, including the annual NDP, and is frequently heard in schools:

We the citizens of Singapore,  
pledge ourselves as one united people,  
regardless of race, language or religion,  
to build a democratic society  
based on justice and equality  
so as to achieve happiness, prosperity and  
progress for our nation.

The five shared values were first proposed in 1988 by Goh Chok Tong (Singapore’s second Prime Minister, 1990–2004) while First Deputy Prime Minister. They were passed by the national parliament in January 1991 with minor amendments:

Nation before community and society before self  
Family as the basic unit of society  
Community support and respect for the individual  
Consensus, not conflict  
Racial and religious harmony

It would, I think, be reasonable to assert that the pledge and the shared values have a thread of what might be called ‘collectivist thought’ running through them. The pledge refers to ‘one united nation’, while arguably each of the values relates in some way to ‘togetherness’, with the first three values having a particularly strong collectivist content. Note too, in passing, that the values are referred to as ‘shared’ values, although they were crafted by the political elite. As Tan (2007, p. 25) puts it, ordinary citizens were ‘generally excluded from the process of formulating these national shared values’, while ‘few Singaporeans actually remember that such values exist, and fewer still know what they are’. Even though that may be the case,

however, it would be unwise to suggest that Singapore's populace is in no way influenced by the PAP mood music of which these values are but one example. The insistence that larger entities (nation, community) should be prioritized above the self manifests itself in numerous ways in the media, in the workplace, in community activities and in school, and is carried by conceptual metaphors such as 'the Singapore team', 'the Singapore family', and the apparent emphasis on 'sharing' to which we shall turn in the next section.

There is also a noticeable tendency among high-profile politicians to use the word 'Singaporeans' repetitively, increasing the emphasis on national identity. Some time ago, (June 2013), Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong spoke about the problem of 'haze' resulting from forest fires in Sumatra. Here are extracts from a report of the speech posted on the Channel News Asia website:

The prime minister also emphasised that Singaporeans must avoid speculation and clarify rumours. He added that they can do so by checking the haze microsite. Mr Lee also urged Singaporeans to help their neighbours, especially older Singaporeans and young children.

To an outsider, such repetitions of the name for a particular group may call to mind a Monty Python comedy sketch, in which Michael Palin appeared as a TV newsreader:

Good evening. Here is the news for parrots. No parrots were involved in an accident on the M1 today when a lorry carrying high-octane fuel was in collision with a bollard...A spokesman for parrots said he was glad no parrots were involved.

The intention of the comedy sketch (first broadcast in Britain in November 1970) may well have been to satirize the practice of the BBC in those days of concluding news reports of calamities around the world, such as earthquakes and plane crashes, by reassuring the audience that 'no British citizens were involved' or 'there are no reports of British casualties'. Such phrases seem to be far less prevalent in the UK media today, but the repetition of 'Singaporeans' in speeches by senior politicians in Singapore persists. It has an echo in schools, where (personal observation) a teacher at, for example, Saint Anthony's Secondary School may address their pupils as 'Anthonians' and offer strictures about the kinds of behaviour and attitude expected of 'Anthonians'. On the website of the Saint Anthony's Primary School<sup>5</sup> we find assertions that 'Anthonians believe in the value of a healthy lifestyle' and that 'Anthonians learn independently and in community and are determined to do the best they can academically'. At both the national level (Singaporeans) and the more localized school level (Anthonians) it is possible to discern a process of top-down socialization at work, in which all those who belong to the relevant group are actively corralled into the enclosure of collectivism.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.anthonian.edu.sg/node/6>.



## 4 The Social Practice of Sharing and the Verb 'Share' in Singapore

In the following section, I focus on both 'sharing' as a social practice in Singapore (particularly in the white-collar workplace) and on the verb 'share' itself, particularly as it appears in the Singapore media when remarks by national political figures are reported. I also show how these phenomena are related to the wider context of power relations and sociopolitical attitudes in the country.

### 4.1 *Sharing as a Distinctively Singaporean Social Practice*

Fairclough (2001, p. 3) defines a social practice as "a relatively stabilised form of social activity" involving a number of elements in dialectical relation, including forms of consciousness; subjects and their social relations; time and place; and values. While 'sharing' stands at a higher order of generality and abstraction than do the examples given by Fairclough of social practices, such as medical consultations or family meals, I would argue that it is possible to see it, too, as a social practice. For instance, it clearly involves, among other factors mentioned by Fairclough, subjects and their social relations, a particular time and place, and sets of values among participants in the 'sharing'.

The word 'sharing' is used to denote a social practice which can occur in various settings (as exemplified below). To the outside observer, the Singaporean conception of 'sharing' can seem distinctive, and even somewhat hard to understand. For instance, in September 2013, Chan Chun Sing, the Minister for Social and Family Development, in a 'dialogue session' in Bukit Batok, was quoted as arguing that 'if everybody in society demands the same, then there is no sharing'. From other comments he made on the same occasion, it appears that he takes the view that sharing entails giving by the more affluent to the less affluent ('for those who have less, we should help them more'). Yet, to return to the first quotation, if everybody in society demands the same, that is a demand for (equal) sharing. Chan Chun Sing's view appears to require inequality ('haves' and 'have-nots') before 'sharing' can take place. This is just one instance of a reference to 'sharing' which, to a non-Singaporean, might appear puzzling.

Another example of 'sharing' in Singapore which expatriates sometimes encounter is workplace 'sharing' in 'white-collar' contexts, such as those in which accountants, teachers, or civil servants meet for professional purposes. As one who has worked in Singapore over a number of years, I can attest to the fact that workplace training or briefing events are sometimes referred to as 'sharing sessions'. This may be so, even though the person or people presenting information at the event may have been requested to do so by line managers, and those mainly functioning as the audience may have been required to attend. Three years or so ago, in an office environment, an email from my then Singapore employers informed me that if I was unable to attend a sharing session I should make this known and, if possible, send someone else in my place. This is a good example of how participation in 'sharing' can be constructed as compulsory in the Singaporean context.

One can find examples of ‘sharing’ in newspapers and on websites of Singaporean origin. This is from the National Integration Council, which devotes itself to the integration of new citizens into Singaporean society through the Singapore Citizenship Journey:

Community Sharing Sessions will provide an opportunity for new Singapore citizens to mingle and interact with grassroots leaders and volunteers from their local community who will share their experiences of living in a multi-racial and multi-religious society.

Community sharing sessions constitute one of three parts of the citizenship journey. Since the word ‘opportunity’ is used here, the impression is created that this activity is voluntary. However, the paragraph which follows dispels this notion:

New citizens who have been granted in-principle approval for Singapore Citizenship (SC) will undergo the SC Journey before they can complete their citizenship formalities. They have up to 2 months to complete the three components.

I shall now attempt to construct an informal description of prototypical ‘sharing’ (as I understand it) with the workplace ‘sharing’ example discussed above. In their influential paper, Coleman and Kay (1981) show how a prototype view of word meaning could be applied to the English word ‘lie’. Although my discussion here is by no means as profound and nuanced, I have used their paper as a springboard for my own description of some semantic characteristics of the English verb ‘share’ and the interpersonal activity of sharing. As Coleman and Kay show (1981, p. 27) ‘applicability of a word to a thing is in general not a matter of “yes or no”, but rather of “more or less”’. This appears to be so in the case of ‘sharing’, as factors involved can differ considerably. Consider the following hypothetical examples, which are invented on the basis of my own, British, intuitions about such social encounters:

1. I ask Rachel if she would like to share a bar of chocolate with me. If she says ‘yes’, I will *give* part of the chocolate bar to her. However, she has *the opportunity to decline* and this will probably be politely accepted if she also expresses thanks for my offer with appropriate voice quality and intonation.
2. I am in a meeting, but I have forgotten to bring a hard copy of the agenda. I ask a colleague sitting nearby if I can share his. *He could say ‘no’*, but this is unlikely as it would damage relations between us over a small matter. Hence, he is likely to agree. I then *receive* from him something which I previously did not have (access to the agenda).

Then recall the example of workplace ‘sharing’ in Singapore:

3. A colleague or visiting speaker gives a presentation. She or he has been asked (or told) to do so by a line manager (hence refusing might be unwise/damaging). Those attending (principally as a passive audience, but perhaps also posing questions) have been asked by their superiors to attend or to send someone in their place. The presentation might or might not include information that is new or useful to any given individual. In the event that it does *not*, that individual has not received anything in the ‘sharing’.

The contrast between items one and two, which I conceive of as illustrating prototypical ‘sharing’ of a physical item or commodity in a British setting, and item three, which I present as rather typical of white-collar workplace ‘sharing’ in a Singaporean context, is striking. The first two examples involve consent plus a transfer of something which the receiver values (chocolate, access to the agenda), or alter-

**Table 1** A comparison of prototypical ‘sharing’ and ‘sharing’ in the Singapore workplace

Prototypical sharing (of chocolate, etc.)	Workplace sharing in Singapore
The potential receiver can decline politely (receiving is optional)	Generally it is impossible to decline (receiving is compulsory)
Involves sharing fairly, or according to need	Does not involve sharing fairly or according to need
Motivated by generosity or a desire for social acceptance	Not motivated by generosity or a desire for social acceptance
Involves the receiver getting something she/he would not otherwise have	May involve the receiver in getting something (information, knowledge) she/he already has
Unlikely to be compulsory for the sharer (the giver of chocolate)	Compulsory for the sharer (the speaker) by virtue of coercion
May stimulate genuine thankfulness in the receiver	May not stimulate genuine thankfulness in the receiver

natively polite refusal on the part of the potential receiver (in case one) or, much less likely, of the potential giver in case two. In the third example, the participants have little realistic opportunity to decline, and the receivers could conceivably have nothing of value transferred to them. Of course, example three could take place in other countries besides Singapore, but it would, at least in my experience, not then be referred to as a ‘sharing’ or ‘sharing session’. It is the use of these terms in Singapore to denote events in which participation may not be voluntary, and nothing of value may be transferred from the ‘sharer’ to other participants, which is noteworthy.

Table 1 compares prototypical ‘sharing’ (of a physical commodity like chocolate) and workplace ‘sharing’ in Singapore (involving, for instance, an employee in ‘sharing’ information gleaned from a conference or a training attachment).

The comparative descriptions shown in Table 1 provide a basis for the claim that workplace ‘sharing’ in Singapore is somewhat distinctive, and differs from what a British outsider might perceive to be prototypical ‘sharing’.

## 4.2 ‘Share’ as a Keyword or Key Word

In the sections of this chapter which deal with how the verb ‘share’ is used by English-speaking Singaporeans, I essentially argue that ‘share’ is a ‘keyword’ (Williams 1976; Bennett et al. 2005) or ‘key word’ (Wierzbicka 1997) in Singaporean culture. Williams, who may be credited with popularizing the concept in academic circles, was a Marxist critic who principally wrote on literature, politics, culture, and the mass media. The selection of his ‘keywords’ involved what he explicitly agreed to be arbitrary decisions. As noted by Bennett et al. (2005), who took up the tricky task of both updating and internationalizing Williams’ rather Anglocentric list and explications, their own choice was partly motivated by their decision to look for keywords in various hybrid areas or ‘clusters’ of western Anglophone culture, such

as ‘race, ethnicity and colonialism’, ‘sexuality and gender’, or ‘modes of power and society’. Hence, one can see that in the Raymond Williams tradition, the identification of ‘keywords’ is largely driven by cultural, rather than linguistic, expertise. This is not the case in the present chapter. The focus on the verb ‘share’ arose initially because of the observation that it is sometimes used in the Singaporean media as a reporting verb (‘PM Lee shared that...’) or, in other words, because of what appears to be a distinctively local *linguistic* phenomenon.

In comparison to Williams, and as an eminent linguist, rather than a sociologist or literary critic, Wierzbicka (1997, p. 16) has a different view on how to ‘justify the claim that a particular word is one of a culture’s ‘key words’, (in two words) and does so by referring, principally, to two criteria. Firstly, the word should be in common use, and secondly ‘one may also want to establish that the word in question (whatever its overall frequency) is very frequently used in one particular semantic domain, for example, in the domain of emotions, or in the domain of moral judgments’ (loc. cit.). The verb ‘share’ is, I would argue, quite commonly used in Singapore although I say this without any clear definition of what I mean by ‘commonly’,<sup>6</sup> but it is less easy to suggest that it occurs in a particular semantic domain. Rather, I argue below that its selection and use by Singaporean speakers is best interpreted in pragmatic terms. However, Wierzbicka continues her discussion of the identification of key words by arguing that ‘ultimately the question is not how to ‘prove’ whether or not a particular word is one of the culture’s key words, but rather to be able to say something significant and revealing about that culture by undertaking an in-depth study of some of them’. This is what is attempted here. I agree with Stubbs (1998, p. 9) who asserts, in discussion of the Williams approach to keywords, that ‘words...reveal unconscious assumptions of their community of users’.

### 4.3 *The Verb ‘Share’ in Singaporean Speech and Writing*

In this section, I shall examine ‘share’ as a verb. I shall consider linguistic data and show that in Singapore the word ‘share’ is used in at least one distinctive way (that-clauses); that it is frequently used in direct or indirect orders by those who have power (such as managers and teachers); and that it is less frequently used in a sarcastic way than it is in communities of speakers of what Wong (2004, p. 232) refers to as Anglo English, the ‘native variety’ of English typically spoken in traditionally English speaking countries such as Britain, North America, and Australia.

In terms of their grammar, instances of reported speech can be divided into two parts: the reporting clause and the reported clause (COBUILD English Grammar 2000 edition, p. 314; Leech and Svartvik 1975, p. 117):

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<sup>6</sup> Stubbs (2010, p. 25) provides more explicit guidance when he suggests that keywords are those ‘which are significantly more frequent in a sample of text than would be expected, given their frequency in a large general reference corpus’.

*Reporting clause:* PM Lee said...

*Reported clause:* ...that Choo will work closely with the government to improve Hougang residents’ lives. (Yahoo News Singapore, 2012)

Reporting verbs occur in the reporting clause (COBUILD Grammar, p. 314; AC-GoE p. 117) and are used to report the speech of others (Bergler 1993, p. 2). Examples of frequently used reporting verbs include ‘say’, ‘claim’, ‘acknowledge’, and ‘suggest’, but numerous verbs are employed in that capacity (see, for instance, COBUILD Grammar, p. 315). Formal Singaporean English sometimes makes use of ‘share’ as a reporting verb (followed by a that-clause), whereas British English rarely if ever does so. Here are some Singaporean English examples which can be found online:<sup>7</sup>

Mr Yeo shared that Productivity and Innovation will take centre-stage... (Speech reported by the Singapore Manufacturers’ Federation).

During his lecture, [Dr. Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury] shared that the world can construct a new and more inclusive history by first accepting our religious diversity through dialogue. (Singapore Press Centre, 2010. Speech by the then Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, July 14 2010).

MM Lee also shared that the cost of living and the cost of housing for young couples will be the main issues for voters in the coming elections. (Yahoo News Singapore, 2011).

PM Lee shared that his aim for Singapore’s education strategy is to get every student into post-secondary education and as many as possible into tertiary institutions. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore, 2007).

Tan shared that he had wanted to resign from the civil service after his scholarship bond ended in 1984 but was asked by SM Goh, who was then Deputy Prime Minister, to be his principal private secretary. (Yahoo News Singapore, 2011).

During his Presidential candidate broadcast speech last week, Dr Tan shared that he met his wife, Mary, at university. (*Today* newspaper, 2011).

This use of ‘share’ as a reporting verb seems to be unusual; it is rarely found in British English texts, for instance. In British National Corpus data where ‘shared that’ occurs, it tends to do so where ‘that’ is a demonstrative pronoun in a noun phrase:

Most UN member states shared that anxiety.

It would be interesting to investigate the response of educated Singaporean speakers of English to the use of the verb ‘share’ in examples of reported speech such as those above. For instance, when reading that their Prime Minister ‘shared that’ his aim was to get every student into post-secondary education and as many as possible into tertiary institutions, do some Singaporeans see this as carrying any implications of generosity or openness on his part? Or, to consider the issue from a different angle, is the choice of ‘share’ as a reporting verb (by, say, a Singaporean journalist) in any way motivated by a desire to portray the speaker in a positive light?

It may be, however, that ‘share’ is gaining ground in British English in ways which bear some similarity to some of those described above in the Singapore context. My own intuitions about British English may be somewhat altered by many years of living and working outside the UK, but I am told by various British email

<sup>7</sup> All sources can be found by entering all or part of the relevant words into a search engine. All the above examples could be accessed online as of September 2013.

correspondents that the use of ‘share’ and ‘sharing’ in a work and official context is growing there too. Here are two online examples:

Thank you for sharing your views. (Ipswich Borough Council)

Thank you for sharing this. Excellent help for revision purposes and showing students how to structure essays appropriately. (Law Exchange website, UK)

Such examples show that ‘sharing’ of views, resources, or information is quite common in British English, though no instances of ‘shared that’ (‘share’ as a reporting verb) can be found, which is a decided difference. I have also failed to find any evidence that the British social practice of ‘sharing’ (e.g. white-collar workplace ‘sharing’) exists in the same way as it does in Singapore. Furthermore, there exists in some varieties of Anglo English a phrase which does not seem to occur frequently, if at all, in Singaporean English: *thank you for sharing*. The Free Online Dictionary glosses this expression as follows:

*Thank you for sharing*. Inf. a sarcastic remark made when someone tells something that is unpleasant, overly personal, disgusting, or otherwise annoying. *Thank you for sharing. I really need to hear about your operation. Thank you for sharing, Bob. I hope your parents’ divorce goes well.*

In Britain (personal experience), the USA (informal feedback from my American colleagues), and perhaps elsewhere in the Anglo English world, the phrase “Thank you for sharing” is often used in a would-be humorous or downright sarcastic way by a hearer who feels that the speaker has revealed something which, by reason of being distasteful or embarrassing, might have been better left unsaid. In my experience this occurs rarely in Singapore, where, when gratitude is expressed for ‘sharing’, the speaker generally intends this to be taken literally.

It is also noticeable in Singapore that the verb ‘share’ is frequently used by teachers. I noted occasional occurrences in several dozen classes conducted in Singapore primary and secondary schools which I attended during 2011. The following examples were, however, culled from data cited by Kramer-Dahl et al. (2007).

T: Arul, let’s hear from you. You come from India. Come, share with us about your country. (p. 182)

T: Yes, they cannot hear you. Can you please, erm, stand and share with us? (p. 185)

T: Wun Kang, do you want to share with us? (p. 186)

T: Ok, Ben, you have an alternative, share with us. (p. 187)

T: Ok, turn around and share with them. (p. 187)

T: Ok, note this point, please, Ben has a good point, share please. (p. 187)

Ben: Which one?

T: The one that you’ve just shared with me. (exchange, p. 187)

T: All right, let’s hear from our three judges and what they have to share with us. (p. 194)

What is noticeable here is that the verb ‘share’ is the only one ever used by the teacher, and never by a student in the 3000 words or so of transcribed data in the paper (Kramer-Dahl et al. 2007). Note also that in the majority of cases, it is used as an imperative. Even when it is not, it could easily be interpreted from the teacher to a pupil as carrying the force of an indirect order (‘Do you want to share with us?’). It would be unwise to overestimate the status of this observation, since classrooms

almost everywhere display unusually asymmetrical power relations in that 'control of the communication lies with the teacher' (Walsh 2011, p. 189). Nevertheless, it is striking that the verb 'share' is used so much by the teacher here (the same teacher throughout) and not at all by the students. From my own informal observations (while at work, 2010–2011, in an office setting) it is also used quite often by managers in Singapore. Questions, which could be interpreted as indirect orders, such as 'John, would you like to share your ideas?' occur not infrequently during workplace meetings.

Having exemplified and discussed both the social practice of sharing and the use of the verb 'share' in Singapore, and in addition drawn out distinctive features of each in comparison with norms observable in the Anglo English world, I shall now provide some conclusions, along with suggestions for further work which might extend or complement the present study.

## 5 Conclusions

In the preceding text, I have discussed distinctive aspects of the social practice of 'sharing' and of use of the verb 'share' in the Singapore context. I have argued that, in both cases, these can be seen as specific examples of the effects of the shaping of the social and linguistic behaviour of ordinary Singaporeans by the dominant discourse of the PAP. I have attempted to describe other features of this dominant discourse via its metaphors and motifs and its most general characteristics (paternalism, collectivism, coercion). Three strong objections may be raised, however, against my line of argument: firstly that I am an outside observer; secondly that I may have selected my evidence to fit a pre-fabricated view of Singaporean society and political life; and thirdly that I have given the impression that ordinary Singaporeans are incapable of thinking for themselves and are easily cowed by establishment rhetoric. I shall deal briefly with these objections in order.

It is certainly the case that I observe social and linguistic phenomena in Singapore as an outsider. I have provided numerous examples of the social practice of sharing and the use of the verb 'share' in this chapter and I have described this qualitative data via an interpretivist approach. It therefore follows that any 'truths' I claim to have revealed are my own 'truths'. Other researchers, and in particular those who are Singaporean, must investigate these phenomena and draw conclusions before greater progress can be made. As a solo researcher, I have necessarily privileged my own interpretations, and these may be vastly different from those of both Singaporean researchers and ordinary members of the Singapore public. My interpretation of a phrase found in a media report such as 'Prime Minister Lee shared that...' is unlikely to be the same as the interpretations of Singaporeans, for example.

On the second objection, I would certainly agree that some of the examples used here, such as those concerning the repetition in texts and speeches of 'Singaporeans' and 'Anthonians', were initially noticed and then incorporated into this chapter be-

cause they fitted into my emerging understanding of Singapore as a collectivist society. However, this is certainly not true of the case of ‘shared that’ in reported speech. The starting-point for this chapter was in fact the discovery, via a search of free online British National Corpus data (see References), that ‘shared that’, though common in the Singapore media, could not be found in British texts. This piqued my interest in both ‘share’ and the social practice of ‘sharing’ in Singapore. This is the defence I would mount against any suggestion that all my data have been collected in order to fit a preconceived position on Singaporean society and politics.

The third possible objection is that I have painted a picture of ordinary Singaporeans easily and insidiously brainwashed by the dominant discourse: of weak, helpless citizens sleepwalking through life, incapable of exercising agency. This is not so, even if, at times, that appearance might be given. I readily recognize that many in Singapore actively question and oppose the dominant discourse and, as Chong (2005, p. 286) points out, these include ‘members of the arts community, liberal intellectuals and academics, and well-educated and well-heeled civil society activists’. Such individuals, he goes on, are often ‘heterodoxical, that is, in possession of beliefs and values that challenge the status quo and received wisdom’. Do all Singaporeans passively accept the dominant discourse, without examining it critically? By no means. However, I have indeed suggested that the almost omnipresent PAP ‘mood music’ must, to some extent, be absorbed as ‘common sense’ by less reflective members of the public.

Further work might proceed in two ways, at least. Firstly, it may be that a researcher in the tradition of Wierzbicka (1997, 2003) could express more clearly and explicitly Singaporean speakers’ conception of ‘share’ and ‘sharing’ by describing it through natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) and thus potentially, according to the NSM view, reduce or eradicate the cultural bias inherent in an ‘outsider’ description of the phenomenon, such as my own. Secondly, if I am right in suggesting that the use of ‘share’ as a reporting verb (‘X shared that Y’) is common in Singapore but uncommon elsewhere, it might also be productive to investigate this phenomenon further, perhaps by collecting qualitative data from samples of Singaporeans on their individual interpretations of ‘shared that’ in media reporting (Prime Minister Lee shared that + clause). In that way, ‘insider’ perspectives could shine through.

I would like to end this chapter, however, by suggesting that the social practice of ‘sharing’ in Singapore may be still more than simply a reflection of the underlying collectivist consciousness. Those who hold power in Singapore seem implicitly to believe, with Lee Kuan Yew, that ‘society is more important than the individual’. Within such a framework of thought, the notion of ‘sharing’, shorn in many cases of its normal volitional nature, assumes the form of a kind of coercion. There is some evidence to suggest that those with power (in politics, in the workplace, in classrooms) in effect coerce those with lesser power (ordinary citizens, junior colleagues, pupils) to ‘share’.



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# Emotional Feelings as a Form of Evidence: A Case Study of Visceral Evidentiality in Mormon Culture

John C. Wakefield

**Abstract** This paper uses the cultural scripts method (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004) to develop a set of scripts which are proposed to articulate some of the socio-pragmatic knowledge held by the speech community popularly known as the Mormons, and officially known as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church). These scripts focus on the value that Mormons place on using feelings as the best and ultimate form of evidence for verifying the truth of anything related to their religious beliefs, and they are proposed to account for the linguistic behavior of Mormons in relation to their knowledge claims, in relation to their stated source of this knowledge, and in relation to their sense of duty to cause others to acquire this knowledge. The scripts in this chapter are supported by linguistic evidence, which comes primarily from the discourse of respected members of the LDS community. The online searches for evidence and the formulation of the scripts were guided by my intuitive knowledge as an L1 speaker of “Mormonese,” having been born and raised within the Mormon community. Basing beliefs on feelings is a value that most cultures and individuals possess to some degree, and the things that are “proven” by one’s feelings to be true will vary depending on the specific belief system of the culture or individual. I refer to this phenomenon as culturally-constructed visceral evidentiality (CVE). The LDS community overtly articulates the value of visceral evidentiality to an unusual degree, so this speech community provides an excellent opportunity for analyzing the characteristics of a specific case of CVE.

**Keywords** Cultural scripts · Visceral evidentiality · Pragmatics and culture · LDS church

## 1 Introduction

This chapter uses the cultural scripts method (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004) in an attempt to articulate some cultural values of the speech community popularly known as Mormons, and officially known as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of

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Latter-day Saints (LDS Church). Cultural scripts are meant to represent the socio-pragmatic knowledge of a speech community's members. They are an attempt to articulate the speech community's values and beliefs, which determine what speakers should and should not say to whom within a given context, as well as how these things should be said. The cultural scripts presented in this chapter are proposed to account for the linguistic behavior of Mormons in relation to their claiming to know specific things, in relation to their stated source of this knowledge, and in relation to their sense of duty to cause others to acquire this knowledge. At the core of these scripts is a high value placed on feelings-based evidence, or what is referred to here as culturally-constructed visceral evidentiality (CVE).

Basing personal knowledge on feelings is part of the human condition. CVE, therefore, probably exists to some degree within the lexicon and discourse of all speech communities, thus making a case study of CVE worthwhile and important. The Mormon speech community is a good choice for such a case study because Mormon-specific CVE is overtly articulated to an unusual degree of clarity by the speech community itself. The Mormon speech community is also comparatively easy to study because there are searchable corpora of written discourse and transcribed oral speech, which are directed at the Mormon speech community, and which come primarily from the most highly respected members of their community (see Sect. 3 for a description of the corpora used).

The following discussion focuses on three things: (1) the forms of, the frequency of, and the importance placed on, making Mormon-specific knowledge claims; (2) the value of basing these claims on evidence that is visceral rather than logical and rational; and (3) the value of causing other people to feel this visceral form of evidence. In order to clarify and contextualize the discussion, a description of some key Mormon beliefs is presented, and definitions of relevant Mormon-specific terms are provided. For our purposes here, "knowledge claim" is defined informally as anything for which a person says: "(I know) *p*," where *p* is a proposition and "I know" is optionally overt or null. There is no distinction made between, for example, an astronomer stating "(I know) the sun is a star" from a paranoid schizophrenic stating "(I know) the TV news anchor is talking about me." This definition also does not distinguish propositions that people merely say they know, from those that people actually think they know.

Philosophers, psychologists, and cognitive scientists are all a long way from fully understanding the precise nature of belief and knowledge (however defined) and how these are formed and represented in the mind/brain. Nevertheless, we all have an intuitive understanding of what others mean when they say "(I know that) *p*." This is true even when the listener believes the *p* of the speaker's utterance to be false, which then means that the listener considers it to be a case of belief rather than knowledge. It is not necessary to understand the nature of claimed knowledge before we can meaningfully discuss the culturally-based reasons and motivations behind speakers stating such claims. My goal here is therefore not to describe the philosophical and logical properties of Mormons' beliefs, but rather to discuss the value that this speech community places on frequently claiming to possess (Mormon-related) knowledge, the value it places on using feelings-based evidence for

this claimed knowledge, and the value it places on causing other people to experience this visceral evidence.

No arguments will be presented for or against the Mormon belief system being true or justifiable. I will assume, however, based on the fact that Mormons make up a small minority of the world's population, that most readers consider the Mormon belief system to be false, irrational, and unjustifiable. It is also assumed here that most readers, especially academics, consider emotional feelings to be unreliable as a source of evidence for the truth or falsity of propositions. As such, it is hoped that most readers will see this study as a move towards helping us understand how and why deeply held irrational and unjustifiable beliefs are developed, reinforced, and maintained within a given speech community, as well as how these beliefs affect verbal behavior. The present study of CVE can therefore be seen as a pioneering study that attempts to shed some light on this phenomenon within other speech communities that hold other types of unjustifiable beliefs that are associated with religion, nationalism, socioeconomic systems, etc.

This paper probably applies to a large extent to all Mormon communities, because American-English Mormon discourse is translated directly into the speech of the Mormon communities around the world, which include a large number of different languages and cultures. This has resulted in remarkably similar behavior in people who are otherwise very different culturally and linguistically. The evidence for this is based on my experience as a missionary among the Hong Kong-Cantonese Mormon community, and on experiences I have heard from people who have served missions in other places throughout the world. However, those Mormon subcommunities do, of course, have many non-Mormon cultural values that differ significantly from American-English Mormons, and these differences are certain to have an influence on the values discussed here. The present discussion is therefore only proposed to apply to American-English Mormons, and only to those who are active members of their church.

Evidentiality is not grammaticalized in English, but is instead represented primarily by verbs such as *to see*, *to hear*, etc. Visceral evidentiality is sometimes expressed by the verbs *to feel* and *to sense*, and there are even some English expressions which indicate that visceral evidentiality is at times considered to be reliable, such as when someone says "I knew in my gut that *p*." This expression is often used in relation to knowledge about another person's intentions or honesty, and would not typically be used to make knowledge claims about, for example, historical facts or scientific theories. The CVE that exists in any given culture likely stems from universal human emotions that people often rely on to help them judge other people's intentions and/or judge environmental contexts. Over time, individual and cultural experiences determine what sorts of things trigger these "evidential" emotions, as well as what these emotions are interpreted to mean.

According to the Mormon belief system, Mormon CVE is not a physiological product of human evolution. It is instead seen to come from an external source (i.e., the Holy Ghost or the Spirit), which creates these feelings in people in order to cause them to know certain things. Mormon CVE is considered to be a good form of evidence for judging other people's honesty and intentions, for getting a "yes"

or “no” answer regarding major life decisions, and for knowing the truthfulness of Mormon-specific propositions (MPs).<sup>1</sup> However, it is not normally considered to be an appropriate form of evidence for academic matters. Nevertheless, it does in actuality serve as a source of knowledge for historical facts and scientific theories because it is considered to be a form of evidence regarding facts about, for example, the age and origin of the earth, and the origin of the American Indians.

Mormons believe that there are certain things that cannot be known from the five senses or from logical reasoning, but can only be known from these culturally-defined feelings that are said to come from the Holy Ghost. When a Mormon says, for example, “I know the Church is true,”<sup>2</sup> all other Mormons understand that this knowledge is ultimately and primarily based on a so-called ‘burning in the bosom’ that comes from the Spirit/Holy Ghost. This is true even if the speaker is considered by Mormons to be a highly knowledgeable Mormon historian. Theoretically, such a person could base his or her knowledge on a collection of nonfeelings-based evidence, but Mormons consider this to be an insufficient form of evidence on its own.

Mormon academics and scientists never cite Mormon CVE as a source of knowledge in their secular careers—not even to other Mormons. This means that, while Mormons consider their version of CVE to be the most reliable source of evidence for any knowledge relating to Mormonism or to important personal life decisions, they do not consider it to be a reliable (or at least not an accessible) source of evidence for academic/scientific knowledge. In other words, a different method and standard is applied to Mormon-based beliefs than to beliefs in the other domains of Mormon’s lives. An understanding of Mormon values in relation to CVE may therefore be a helpful guide for future research that attempts to understand other speech communities’ compartmentalized belief systems, i.e., belief systems in which some types of beliefs are based on CVE and other types are based on rational inquiry.

The paper proceeds as follows. The next section gives an overview of the Mormon Church and its followers’ beliefs. Section 3 introduces the natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) and explains the two things that NSM has been used for: to explicate the meanings of words; and to write cultural scripts that are free of ethnocentric bias. Section 4 then proposes some explications of Mormon-specific terms and proposes some cultural scripts that are designed to articulate Mormon-specific cultural values related to evidence, belief, and conversion. Section 5 summarizes the chapter and discusses the implications.

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<sup>1</sup> The Spirit is also said to be a source of comfort during difficult times, such as after the death of a loved one. When this comfort is presented merely as helping one to get through this difficult time, then it is not related to this chapter. However, comfort from the Spirit is often presented as a source of knowledge that, for example, one will be reunited in the afterlife with the loved one who just passed away. Or it could be as simple as letting them know that things will be all right. In this sense, Mormons are verbally claiming that the comforting feeling of the Spirit is giving them knowledge, and in such cases these speech acts are directly related to this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> The Mormon Church is almost always referred to by Mormons as “the Church,” preceded by the definite article and capitalized when written. This is always understood to refer to the Mormon Church rather than any other church.

## 2 An Overview of Mormon Beliefs

The official news-release website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints currently claims that the Church has 15,082,028 members worldwide, but the number of people who actually self-identify as Mormons is probably much lower.<sup>3</sup> The LDS Church is a Christian sect which teaches that God the Father, his son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost are three separate beings.<sup>4</sup> Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are said to have bodies of flesh and bones, while the Holy Ghost is a spirit that will later be born and get a body. The LDS Church adopts a literal interpretation of the Bible, meaning that, for example, the stories of Job, the Tower of Babel, and Noah and the Ark are all considered to be actual historical events.

According to LDS doctrine, after all of Jesus' apostles died, there were no longer any men on earth with the power of the priesthood. Because God's "true church" must be led by men with priesthood power, God's church did not exist on earth from shortly after the time of Jesus until the power of the priesthood was restored in the early nineteenth century. This so-called restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ includes the following events. In the spring of 1820, God the Father and Jesus Christ physically appeared to a 14-year-old boy named Joseph Smith. Nine years later, on May 15, 1829, the resurrected John the Baptist physically laid his hands on the heads of Joseph Smith and his associate Oliver Cowdery, and then, speaking English, gave the power of the Aaronic Priesthood, the lower priesthood, to Joseph and Oliver (Hinckley 1988; Porter 1996). Sometime during the following 2-week period, the New Testament apostles Peter, James, and John physically appeared to Joseph and Oliver and gave them the power of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which is the higher priesthood, also by the laying on of hands (Porter 1996). The implication is that from the time of Christ and his apostles up until May of 1829, no men other than Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had ever had any authority from God. This authority is considered to have been passed on to all of the leaders of the LDS Church, and from 1829 to the present, no other church has ever had, nor ever will have, such authority.<sup>5</sup>

Since the restoration, the Church has been led by a prophet (also called the president of the Church), who has two counselors. These three men make up what is

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<sup>3</sup> 15,082,028 members are claimed at "Facts and Statistics," Mormon Newsroom (Accessed August 1, 2014): <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/facts-and-stats>. However, David Campbell said the Church's membership claim "includes everyone who has ever been a member—even babies—and hasn't been excommunicated or asked to have their names removed from the rolls" (Stack 2012). In other words, the LDS Church does not use the more meaningful and more conventional method of only counting people who self-identify as Mormons.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 5 regarding its status as a Christian sect.

<sup>5</sup> I believe it is primarily this story of the Mormon restoration, which includes literal, direct physical communication with God the Father, Jesus Christ, and other biblical figures that has caused many Christian sects to consider The Mormon Church blasphemous and to refuse to recognize it as a Christian sect. The LDS Church's nontraditional concept of the Godhead being three separate personages, and its claim of exclusive authority to speak for God and to act in God's name, are also difficult for other Christian sects to accept.

called the First Presidency. Below them are twelve apostles. Mormons consider these men to be prophets and apostles in literally the same sense as the prophets and apostles of the Bible. The titles normally used for prophets and apostles are “President” and “Elder,” respectively, followed by the surname. However, in order to make it clear to readers what these men are in the minds of Mormons, this paper adopts the atypical format of using “Prophet” and “Apostle” as titles preceding surnames, e.g., the current prophet, President Monson, is referred to here as Prophet Monson.

On September 21, 1823, 6 years before the restoration of the priesthood, an angel named Moroni (mō-rō’nī) is said to have visited Joseph Smith one evening in his bedroom.<sup>6</sup> Moroni showed Joseph where a book of gold plates was buried near his home, and 4 years later, in September of 1827, Joseph was allowed to take these gold plates and translate them (Peterson 1992). The plates were said by Joseph Smith to be engraved with characters in a language that he called “reformed Egyptian.” The product of this so-called translation is the now well-known *Book of Mormon* (Smith 1830).

*The Book of Mormon* tells the story of a Jewish family that, around 590 BC, built a ship and sailed from Jerusalem to the Americas (“the promised land”). Among them were two brothers named Nephi (nē’fī) and Laman (lā’mun). The former was righteous and the latter was not. Their descendants are referred to as the Nephites and the Lamanites. The Lamanites were said by Mormons, until very recently, to be the ancestors of the American Indians. DNA studies have demonstrated, however, that they are of Asian descent (cf. Southerton 2004). As a result, the introduction to *The Book of Mormon* was changed in 2006 from saying that the Lamanites “are the principal ancestors of the American Indians” to saying they “are among the ancestors of the American Indians” (emphasis mine). This change still leaves intact the Mormon belief that God literally cursed a group of white-skinned people with black skin. All editions of *The Book of Mormon* have said the following:

[B]ecause of their iniquity, [God] caused...the cursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing. ...wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them. And thus saith the Lord God: I will cause that they shall be loathsome unto thy people, save they shall repent of their iniquities. And cursed shall be the seed of him that mixeth with their seed; for they shall be cursed even with the same cursing. ...And because of their cursing which was upon them they did become an idle people, full of mischief and subtlety.... (*Book of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 5: 21–24)

Mormons consider *The Book of Mormon* to be scripture in the very same sense that the Bible is scripture. It is given a literal, historical interpretation. In addition to these two canons, the LDS Church has two additional books of scripture. One is the Doctrine and Covenants, which includes direct quotes from Jesus Christ speaking to Joseph Smith. The other is the Pearl of Great Price, which includes Joseph Smith’s “translation” of Egyptian papyri that he claimed were written by the prophet Abraham when he was in Egypt. Egyptologists have since confirmed that what is written on the papyri are actually common funerary texts that say nothing at all in relation to

<sup>6</sup> The statue of an angel blowing a horn seen on top of every Mormon temple is the angel Moroni.



Joseph Smith's so-called translation of them. The Mormon community's response to this is an excellent illustration of how they place a much greater value on CVE than on physical evidence. They went from: (1) knowing that the book of Abraham is true based partly on feelings from the Holy Ghost and partly on the physical evidence of the Egyptian papyri that Joseph Smith claimed it was translated from, to (2) knowing that the book of Abraham is true based entirely on feelings from the Holy Ghost. In an article in *Ensign*, the Church's most prominent official magazine, Rhodes (1988, p. 51) explained the facts about the papyri being common Egyptian funerary texts, and concluded that it was a divine translation that, unlike physical translations, did not require the translator to have access to the original text. Rhodes then explained how one can know that the book of Abraham is true:

In the final analysis, however, the proof of the truth of the book of Abraham does not come by human means. As with all aspects of the restored gospel, "by the power of the Holy Ghost [we] may know the truth of all things" (The Book of Mormon, Moroni 10:5). I have studied the book of Abraham, and the truth of it has been made known to me in a way I can't deny. I know that anyone who earnestly wants to know if the book of Abraham is true can also receive this same witness and knowledge from God.

This is a good illustration of the Mormon community's overtly expressed value of claiming to know Mormon-specific propositions (in this case: "the book of Abraham is true") based on a visceral witness from the Holy Ghost, even when there is extremely compelling counter evidence (roughly in this case: "The papyri from which Joseph Smith said he translated the book of Abraham contain, according to Egyptologists, a common funerary text that was not written by Abraham, and whose content is not at all related to the content of the book of Abraham"). Mormon Apostle Oaks (2001) demonstrated the same value when he said that "secular evidence can neither prove nor disprove the authenticity of *The Book of Mormon*. Its authenticity depends, as it says, on a witness of the Holy Spirit" (p. 239). The explications and cultural scripts in Sect. 4 attempt to account for this common form of verbal behavior in the Mormon speech community.

### 3 The Cultural Scripts Method

The cultural scripts method articulates cultural norms and values based on linguistic evidence, i.e., based on what members of a given speech community regularly say. The norms and values expressed by the cultural scripts are meant to represent the sociopragmatic knowledge that is shared among members of a speech community. Cultural scripts are written using the culturally neutral terms of NSM (Wierzbicka 1996; Goddard 2008, 2011). NSM consists of semantic primes whose meanings are theorized to be identical crosslinguistically, and are argued to have lexicalized forms in all natural languages. As such, these NSM primes that are used for defining culturally specific terms, or for writing cultural scripts, are void of ethnocentric meanings. The result is that they are easily understood by people from outside the culture. Cultural scripts are written from the perspective of the members of the

speech community in question; the goal is to help cultural outsiders understand the cultural values from the perspective of those who possess them (for a detailed description of the cultural scripts method, see Wierzbicka 2003; Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004).

This study is based on the premise that, by analyzing common utterances within LDS discourse that relate to knowledge claims, and which, more specifically, relate to the visceral evidence on which these claims of knowledge are based, we can discover the culturally specific values that cause the Mormon community to make these utterances. The majority of the linguistic evidence for this study comes from two sources of Mormon discourse that are available free online. One is the LDS Church's official website ([www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org)), all of the contents of which can be searched by using key words or phrases. The site's main content includes electronic versions of the four canons of Mormon scripture, the Church's four official magazines, Sunday school lesson manuals, and transcriptions of the General Conference talks dating back to 1971. A more comprehensive corpus of the General Conference talks is available with a more sophisticated search engine. It is called the Corpus of LDS General Conference talks, and allows searches within all of the General Conference talks from 1851 to 2010. It includes 24 million words in 10,000 talks (<http://corpus.byu.edu/gc/>). General Conference is held twice a year at the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, Utah, and is broadcast live to Mormons around the world, and is simultaneously interpreted from English into 93 other languages (Merrill 2011). Almost all of the talks are given by church leaders. Transcriptions of these talks are printed in special editions of the Church's main official magazine *Ensign*, and videos of the talks are included along with the transcriptions on the Church's website.

My personal history and perspective are relevant to the discussion and to my ability to define Mormon terms and write cultural scripts that describe the Mormon speech community. I am a native speaker of "Mormonese," having grown up within a family that has been LDS on both sides going back to the Mormon pioneers. We were always active members, meaning we attended church weekly and we regularly went to church-organized activities. Like all active members, I was occasionally asked to speak on an assigned topic to the congregation. Mormon church services are made up of such talks rather than of a long sermon prepared by a paid clergy, which is the normal practice in most other Christian sects. These talks that are given by average church members usually include the bearing of one's testimony. In addition to bearing my testimony during such talks, I also did so during fast and testimony meetings, which is a special church service that is held on the first Sunday of every month in place of the regular service. No talks are prepared for fast and testimony meeting, which functions to allow members to spontaneously stand and bear their testimonies to the congregation. As is true of all active Mormons, my family members were regularly assigned to serve in various church callings. My father served as the bishop<sup>7</sup> of our ward (i.e., congregation) for a period of time.

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<sup>7</sup> A Mormon bishop is a man who is roughly equivalent to a Protestant pastor or minister. He is an unpaid, untrained member of the ward who is "called" by the Church's leaders to serve as bishop for a period of time.

Mormon boys are commanded to serve a mission for the Church when they are of age, so I served a mission when I turned nineteen.<sup>8</sup> Even though it is understood by Mormons to be a commandment for boys to serve missions, Mormons virtually always tell outsiders that Mormon boys freely volunteer without pressure from the Mormon community. Growing up in the Church, I always understood it to be a commandment, and it is easy to cite official sources which show that this is clearly the case. The *New Era* is one of the Church's magazines and is targeted at Mormon youth. Elder Christian Hans, a missionary in Arkansas at the time, was quoted in the magazine saying: "[e]ligible boys are commanded to serve missions" (Hans 1992). Prophet Benson (1988, p. 178) said the "Lord needs every young man between the ages of nineteen and twenty-six, worthy, prepared, and excited about serving in the mission field." The Gospel Doctrine manuals are Sunday school teaching manuals for adults. One such manual says that "[t]hrough his prophets, the Lord has repeatedly commanded every worthy, able young man to serve a full-time mission" (The Church of Jesus Christ of LDS 2001, p. 163). Another Sunday school manual that is written for boys who are pre-missionary age, instructs the teacher to "[e]mphasize that through his prophets the Lord has commanded us to serve missions" (The Church of Jesus Christ of LDS (1995, p. 99). Prophet Monson 1990/1979), who was a member of the First Presidency at the time, said that the "command to go [on a mission] has not been rescinded. Rather, it has been reemphasized." Nevertheless, Mormons tell outsiders that Mormon boys all freely volunteer. I propose that this speech behavior is linked to script (8) in Sect. 4.2.

I am no longer a Mormon. I stopped attending church soon after my mission and eventually concluded that there was no good reason to believe what I had been taught to believe throughout my childhood. I lost the cultural value of interpreting emotional feelings as a form of reliable evidence that proves MPs to be true. In theory, anyone should be able to use the culture scripts method to study the value that Mormons place on visceral evidence. However, I think that as an ex-Mormon, I am in a unique position to carry out this study because, as a native of the speech community, I have an LI understanding of the lexical items and cultural values and beliefs that are discussed in this chapter. This informed and guided my searches for relevant Mormon speech behavior and, more importantly, provided me with an intuitive understanding of the values under discussion.

Poole (this volume) pointed out that cultural phenomena are so normal to cultural insiders that these phenomena can be difficult for the insiders to see. He said that once insiders' attention is explicitly drawn to such phenomena, however, they are in a unique position to explain it. After my process of becoming an outsider with insider knowledge, my attention was drawn to the phenomena discussed in this chapter every time an outsider asked me what Mormons believe and why. Each time this happened, I thought about how and why my "outsider response" differs

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<sup>8</sup> The rules about missions are adjusted periodically, and recently Mormon boys have been given the option to go at 18 years of age instead 19. Girls have never been commanded to serve missions, but have always been told they have the option to go. Their age of service was also recently lowered from 21 to 19, and they serve for 18 months rather than 2 years.

from a typical “insider response” to that same question. The knowledge I have accumulated from my experience of being, simultaneously, an insider and an outsider, can be seen as what Wierzbicka (2003, p. x) refers to as “the ‘soft data’ of personal experience of cross-cultural and cross-linguistic living.” I supplement this soft data with the hard data that was collected from the corpora for this study. Wierzbicka considered this alliance between soft and hard data to be “an important new aspect of cross-cultural pragmatics” (Wierzbicka (2003).

Furthermore, my outsider perspective allows me to discuss these values and beliefs from the perspective of the vast majority of fellow academics, i.e., as one who does not believe the things that a typical Mormon regularly claims to know. If I were still a devout Mormon, I would probably not feel comfortable discussing the cultural values that are the topic of this chapter for any purpose other than to try and cause these values to develop in other people. As a nonbeliever, I can use my insider knowledge to present this case study in an attempt to shed some light on what Gilovich (1993) called “How we know what isn’t so.”

The cultural scripts in Sect. 4.2 are not argued to be represented equally in the minds of all Mormons, nor are they argued to affect all Mormons in the same way. Individual members of a given society will differ in the degree to which they choose to follow their culture’s norms and to behave in a way that the speech community as a whole considers appropriate. What defines people as members of a given social group is not their strict adherence to the norms. Rather it is their knowledge of what the norms are. Generalizing the scripts to all active Mormons should therefore not be seen as a limitation to this study (assuming the scripts are accurate). I must also add that it is assumed here that active Mormons are all somewhere along a continuum, from those on one end that actually hold these cultural values, to those on the other end that merely act as if they hold these cultural values. In either case, the individual is aware of what these values are, and the resulting speech and behavior will be similarly guided by them—though of course Mormons’ speech and behavior will very likely match the values more for those who actually hold them.

I think that most Mormons who believe Mormon specific propositions assume that almost all active Mormons also believe MPs, and are therefore experiencing “false consensus,” which refers to the false belief that all members of the community share one’s own beliefs. I base this on my knowing a number of active Mormons (and hearing about many others) who do not believe MPs, but who are still active members of the community. At the same time, active Mormons who do not believe MPs are perhaps experiencing a watered down form of “pluralistic ignorance,” which refers to the idea that almost every member of a group rejects the publicly stated beliefs of that group, but that they believe that everyone else in the group accepts these beliefs (Prentice and Miller 1996). I say “watered down version” because I think the majority of Mormons actually do believe MPs, but that it is probably not as large a majority as most Mormons think. When I was an active Mormon I experienced periods of both “false consensus” and “pluralistic ignorance”; there were times when I sincerely believed MPs and times when I did not. During both of those times, I mistakenly assumed that virtually every active Mormon believed MPs, because their verbal behavior indicated that they did.

## 4 Mormon-Specific Terms and Cultural Values Related to CVE

In addition to unique values, there are unique Mormon terms. There are also some well-known terms that the Mormon speech community uses in unique ways. For example, the Mormon version of the term “gentile” refers to any person who is not a Mormon, which means that Mormons consider Jews to be gentiles. There is a useful compilation of Mormon terms online that was created by ex-Mormon Richard Packham. These terms can also be searched for on the Mormon Church’s official website.<sup>9</sup> For our purposes here, however, only the four terms discussed in Sect. 4.1 need to be understood by readers in order to understand the Mormon cultural values that are described in Sect. 4.2.

### 4.1 *Explications of Some Relevant Mormon Terms and Phrases*

In Mormon discourse, reference to “the Mormon Church” is virtually always reduced to “the Church” when addressing fellow members of the speech community. In written discourse, “the Church” is capitalized as has been done for this paper. When speaking to outsiders, Mormons usually refer to the Church as “our Church.” The noun phrase “the Church” refers to a combination of the following two things: (1) the collection of, and hierarchal structure of, all its members, and the buildings where they meet and worship; and (2) the teachings of the top Mormon leaders regarding God, God’s plan, God’s commandments, etc. The Mormon term “the Gospel” refers only to the teachings stated in Sect. 2, above. A fairly common thing for Mormons to say is that the Church is not perfect, but that the Gospel is. The idea behind this is that the Church is run by imperfect people, and is therefore imperfect, while the Gospel comes from God, and is therefore perfect. Nevertheless, most Mormons seem to use the two terms interchangeably when they say “I know the Church/Gospel is true.”

The next Mormon term that requires explanation is the noun “testimony.” Apostle Oaks (2008) said that a “testimony of the gospel is a personal witness borne to our souls by the Holy Ghost that certain facts of eternal significance are true and that we know them to be true.” The Holy Ghost is also referred to as the Holy Spirit, or just the Spirit. What Oaks meant by “certain facts of eternal significance” was of course Mormon-specific facts. By saying it is “borne to our souls” he means that it is something that is felt, not something that is seen or heard. The Mormon term “testimony,” therefore, refers to viscerally acquired knowledge of Mormon-specific concepts. Stone (1975), who was Assistant to the Twelve Apostles at the time, illustrated the importance placed on having a testimony when he said that to “a Latter-day Saint, a testimony of the truthfulness of the restored gospel is the most precious

<sup>9</sup> The URL of the glossary is: <http://packham.n4m.org/glossary.htm>, and the URL of the official Mormon website with a search function is: [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org).

possession he can have.” The following explication is proposed for what it means to have a testimony:

- (1) To have a testimony
  - some people know these kinds of things (MPs):
    - The Church is true
    - Joseph Smith was a prophet (of God)
    - Jesus lives
    - The Book of Mormon* is true
  - these people have a testimony

A testimony only relates to Mormon-specific knowledge. This is represented in parentheses in the first line of (1) as MPs, which stands for any Mormon-specific propositions that would be considered appropriate to use in the knowledge claims of Mormons. The number of propositions related to Mormon-specific knowledge claims is technically infinite, because claiming, for example, that “Joseph Smith was a prophet of God” entails the claims that Joseph Smith lived and that he was a person, but these claims are unlikely to be overtly expressed as part of a person’s testimony. A clearer example is that claiming “*The Book of Mormon* is true” entails the claim that a group of white-skinned people were cursed by God with black skin. Although this claim is technically a Mormon-specific knowledge claim, it would be considered inappropriate to verbalize as being part of a person’s testimony and therefore would not be included among the possible propositions labeled as MPs. It is also worth noting that a relatively small number of MPs are typically thought of by Mormons as being critical components of a testimony, and the wording used when Mormons bear their testimonies therefore tends to be somewhat formulaic. A partial list of some of the more important MPs is included in script (1) above.

Mormons do not assume that people are born with a testimony. Each person must gain his or her own personal testimony, and normally this can only happen by asking God and then being touched by the Spirit. The resulting feeling is the source of the Mormon-specific CVE that is the topic of this paper. The key role of this member of the godhead (i.e., the Holy Ghost) is to provide evidence of truth. Apostle Romney (1976), who was second counselor to the prophet at the time, said that a “testimony comes through the power of the Holy Ghost. Every person who has ever had a testimony received it through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.” The explication in (2) proposes to define the Mormon concept of gaining a testimony:

- (2) To gain a testimony
  - a. people can say things like this to God:
    - ‘I want to know:
      - Is the Church true?
      - Was Joseph Smith a prophet?
      - Does Jesus live?
      - Is *The Book of Mormon* true?’
  - b. if they want to know these things, they will feel the Spirit  
if they do not want to know these things, they will not feel the Spirit
  - c. when they feel the Spirit, they will know these things

In order to get a testimony a person can, as described in (2a), ask God if MPs are true. (2b) indicates that someone will only feel the Spirit if they sincerely want to know these things. *The Book of Mormon* (Moroni 10:4) says “if ye shall ask [God] with a sincere heart, with real intent...[then] He will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.” If someone says they did not feel the Spirit after asking God to know if MPs are true, then it is assumed that the person lacked a sincere desire to know, and when this is the case they should ask God again when they are ready. This required component of gaining a testimony as expressed in (2b) can be seen in the quotation from Rhodes (1988, p. 51) at the end of Sect. 2: “I know that anyone who *earnestly wants to know* if the book of Abraham is true can also receive this same witness and knowledge from God” (emphasis mine). Mormon CVE is only accessible to people who truly desire to know if MPs are true.

As explained in Sect. 3, weekly services do not include a lengthy sermon from the ward’s bishop. Members of the congregation are instead assigned to speak and bear their testimonies, and once a month the Church service is dedicated entirely to the bearing of testimonies. As a result, publicly claiming knowledge of MPs is a regular speech routine for all active Mormons. The explication in (3) defines what it means to bear one’s testimony:

(3) To bear one’s testimony

someone is bearing their testimony when they say things like this:

‘I know the Church is true  
 I know Joseph Smith was a prophet (of God)  
 I know Jesus lives  
 I know *The Book of Mormon* is true’

Normally a testimony will end with the person saying, “(I say these things) in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.” This is how prayers and testimonies end when said within the Mormon speech community. However, it is not included in the definition of bearing one’s testimony in (3) because when Mormons make MP knowledge claims to non-Mormons, they would most likely not include this standard ending, but their act of verbalizing MP knowledge claims would still be recognized as the bearing of their testimony.

In the quote from *The Book of Mormon* above, the phrase “by the power of the Holy Ghost” refers to feeling the Spirit. The feeling that comes from being touched by the Spirit is often described as “a burning in the bosom” or “a still small voice.” Feeling the Spirit is the only way that someone can truly and fully know that MPs are true. People can read and hear about the Church, and may conclude from their investigation that MPs are true based on the evidence they have seen and heard, but as Apostle Romney (1976) explains, “the ultimate form of evidence is a feeling that comes from being touched by the Spirit. Such a testimony is not produced by the learning of the world. It does not come through philosophizing or from studying what men, who do not have a testimony, say.”

Feeling the Spirit can also be a form of evidence for knowing what action to take. For example, when Mormons make important career decisions, or decisions about whether or not to move to another location, they will usually pray for an answer. The resulting decision is then said to have been confirmed by a “feeling,” which is

typically modified by adjectives such as “comfortable” or “peaceful.” The explication in (4) describes what lies behind the concept of feeling the Spirit:

(4) To feel the (Holy) Spirit

the Spirit can touch people  
 when this happens,  
     they feel something good about good things  
     they feel something good about true things  
     they feel something bad about bad things  
     they feel something bad about not true things  
 when someone feels the Spirit touch them,  
     they can know that something is (not) true  
     they can know that something is good/ bad  
     they can know what (not) to do

Romney’s (1976) saying that feeling the Spirit is “the ultimate form of evidence” means that it trumps all other forms of counter evidence, which can then be ignored or reinterpreted, as illustrated by Rhodes (1988) having maintained his belief in the truthfulness of the book of Abraham in spite of the compelling empirical evidence to the contrary.

## ***4.2 Cultural Scripts of Mormon Values Related to Evidence and Knowledge Claims***

Having defined some relevant terms, this subsection proposes four cultural scripts that are proposed to account for the following four types of Mormon behavior: (1) actively working to maintain their knowledge of MPs, or, in other words, to maintain a testimony; (2) attempting to instill this knowledge in other people; (3) working to instill this knowledge in children; and (4) ensuring that people have good feelings about the Church. Of course what is referred to as “knowledge” here is assumed by outsiders to be merely “belief.”

It is often overtly recognized that a testimony can be “lost.” After a testimony is gained, one must work to “build,” “strengthen,” and “maintain” his or her testimony. Mormons frequently speak of the danger of one’s testimony being “challenged.” There is an understanding that counter evidence to MPs can be very difficult to ignore. The ability to be unswayed by what appears to be compelling, rational counter evidence of MPs is a valued trait in the Mormon community. Mormons are expected to maintain a testimony no matter what other people say. It is recognized that a Mormon can lose his or her testimony as a result of hearing counter evidence to MPs, or as a result of learning about historical facts about the Church or its leaders that are not conducive to what one would expect of an organization that is (or of men who are) considered to be so directly connected with God. Mormons are very aware that outsiders criticize them for maintaining what the outsiders consider to be false beliefs. Related to this, Hales (1994), one of the Twelve Apostles, said the following:

Be willing to endure the test of time. Do not think that it is easy to maintain a testimony. Others will test you. Sometimes they will point the finger of mockery and scorn. Sometimes they may persecute you openly. Be prepared. Know in advance that the best of God’s



children have had the courage of true conviction and were willing to suffer ridicule, deprivation, and even death for the sake of true testimony. Is each of us willing to do likewise?

The script in (5) proposes to describe the Mormon value of maintaining a testimony:

- (5) Script on maintaining a testimony:
- a. it is good if I think I know things like these (MPs):
    - the Church is true
    - Joseph Smith was a prophet
    - Jesus lives
    - The Book of Mormon* is true
  - it is bad if I think maybe I don't know these things
  - b. many people know these things (MPs) are true
    - it is good if I often hear them say this
    - it is good if other people often hear them say this
  - c. some people say bad things about the Church
    - some people say these things (MPs) are not true
    - it is bad if I hear them say this
    - it is bad if other people hear them say this
    - if this happens, I have to think something like this:
      - these people are saying bad things
      - these things are not true
    - it is good if I say something good about the Church at this time

The lines of (5a) express that it is good to have a testimony and is bad to doubt it. The lines of (5b) indicate that it is good to hear other believers bear their testimonies. The lines of (5c) articulate the concern Mormons have about the criticisms and challenges to Mormon beliefs that are often made by nonbelievers. It is bad to hear such criticisms and challenges, but it is inevitable, and when it happens the Mormon community values one's ability to know in every case that what these critics say is not true. The fourth line of (5c) represents the idea that Mormons think it is also bad for other people to hear these challenges to Mormon beliefs. This is because it can challenge these other people's testimonies if they are Mormons, or it can prevent them from gaining testimonies if they are not yet Mormons. This concern about the testimonies (or potential testimonies) of others is also seen in scripts (6), (7), and (8) below. The final line of (5c) indicates that Mormons feel compelled to say something good about the Church in an attempt to cause people to feel something good about it, i.e., to counteract the bad thing that was said by saying something good and/or saying that this bad thing is not true. This verbal behavior makes sense considering the fact that a good feeling is the ultimate form of evidence for the truthfulness of MPs. I propose that the value expressed in (5c) also accounts for most Mormons avoiding reading or listening to things that challenge MPs, or what Mormons refer to as anti-Mormon literature.

It is overtly recognized that one way of maintaining a testimony is to bear it to other people. Apostle Packer (1988), for example, said a "testimony is to be *found* in the *bearing* of it!" (emphasis his). Related to this, Apostle Oaks (2008) said:

Another way to seek a testimony seems astonishing when compared with the methods of obtaining other knowledge. We gain or strengthen a testimony by bearing it. Someone even suggested that some testimonies are better gained on the feet bearing them than on the knees praying for them.

In addition to helping one gain and strengthen one's own testimony, bearing it is how one causes others to gain a testimony. Apostle Hales (1994) said the following:

Let others know that you know. Bear your testimony in fast meeting. Tell your family; tell your friends. You will find when you share your testimony it becomes stronger, and there are many others around you who also want to embrace the truth.

In relation to this, consider the script in (6):

- (6) Script on bearing one's testimony to help one's self and others gain or strengthen theirs:
- a. it is good if I often say that I know these things (MPs)  
     It is good if because of this,  
         I feel the Spirit  
         other people feel the Spirit
  - b. it is bad if I say that (maybe) I don't know these things  
     it is bad if because of this, people will not know these things

The lines in (6a) express the value of bearing a testimony, and thereby causing one's self and other people to gain (or strengthen) their testimony as a result of feeling the Spirit. The lines in (6b) represent the value of not expressing doubt or lack of knowledge of MPs because this might cause other Mormons to lose their testimony or prevent outsiders from gaining one.

Ensuring that children gain testimonies is one of the primary goals of the community. The aim of the child-rearing process is "to enculturate the child to become an effective and valued member of society" (Chan 2011). A Mormon who does not (claim to) have a testimony, and who does not regularly bear his or her testimony, is not a truly effective and valued member of the speech community, which is why causing children to have testimonies is a key child-rearing value. Indoctrinating children is one of God's commandments, and when Mormon leaders remind parents of this commandment they frequently quote a verse from the Doctrine and Covenants: "[I]nasmuch as parents...teach [their children] not to understand [Mormon] doctrine...the sin be upon the heads of the parents" (D&C 68:25). In the April 1902 General Conference, Apostle Cowley quoted this verse, adding that it is "the duty of every father and mother to... indoctrinate them in the principles of the gospel."<sup>10</sup>

This indoctrination process is not merely about teaching children what the principles of the gospel are, but, more importantly, to ensure that they gain their own personal testimonies of the gospel. Prophet Kimball (1978, p. 2) said, "We must be energetic and devoted in supporting the efforts of parents to build testimonies and faith in their children." An important part of the testimony building process includes Mormon adults repeatedly bearing their testimonies to children.

Apostle Dunn (1972, p. 84) admonished Mormon parents as follows:

...may [Mormon] parents bear their testimonies to their children in the home—actually express to your children exactly what it is about the Church you know to be true. If we think our children know these things just because they live in the same house with us, we are mistaken. We need to say the words so our families can feel the same spirit of testimony that we have felt.

<sup>10</sup> Cowley, Matthias F. 1902. *Conference Report*, April, p. 72.

Bearing one's testimony to one's children is seen as a critical part of the process of helping them gain their own testimonies. When parents bear testimony to their children, it demonstrates how it is done, and it teaches children that this verbal routine is something Mormons do.

The December 1989 issue of *Ensign* included an article titled, "How to Help Our Children Gain a Testimony." The article said "No matter what their ages, our children need to hear our testimonies and faith-promoting stories." It suggested that after church meetings, parents "can testify of the truthfulness of what [they] have heard and felt." Then the article said children should be taught to say these things themselves at home. And once they "begin to feel comfortable expressing themselves at home, they can be encouraged to bear testimony in fast and testimony meeting."

Apostle Eyring (quoted in Cook 2002, p. 29) said, "First we can teach [our children] some sacred truth. Then, we can testify that we know what we have taught is true." Elder Cook (2002, p. 29), a church leader ranked lower than an apostle, then explained that the home is the best place to teach children how to "express heartfelt feelings" as "a prelude to testimony bearing." He said that an "integral part of family communication" should be the discussion of gospel principles and the sharing of spiritual feelings. He provided examples of scripts for parents to use. One script went like this: "Today in sacrament meeting I felt the Spirit confirming the truth of the counsel given by our bishop." The next step is to then get children to say such things themselves, and Cook (2002) suggested some questions parents could ask to get their children started: "Would you like to tell me what you are feeling now? What did you feel in your heart as we discussed this principle?" This explicitly teaches children to link their feelings to thinking and talking about Gospel principles. This then progresses to the public bearing of these testimonies: "Parents are responsible to teach their young children how to bear their testimonies in public settings, [which is] a natural extension of the testimony bearing experiences family members have at home."

Similar instructions were given by the prophet and his two counselors in the form of a letter from the First Presidency dated May 2, 2002:

Parents and teachers should help children learn what a testimony is and when it is appropriate for them to express it. It may be best to have younger children learn to share their testimonies at such times as family home evening or when giving talks in Primary until they are old enough to do so in a fast and testimony meeting.

Family home evening is a weekly event held by active Mormons on Monday evenings. It is like an informal church service held at home. It opens and closes with a prayer and includes a lesson about some gospel principle. The family members, including the children, take turns giving the lesson, which normally includes the bearing of one's testimony. Again we can see that bearing one's testimony to family members and other Church members is an integral part of growing up a Mormon.

West (1993) said that "children are limited in knowledge and experience, [but that] they have positive feelings about the gospel which they can learn to recognize and share [and they] should be taught early in life to bear their testimonies." Children are taught to accept "positive feelings" as a form of evidence for knowledge

of MPs, and are taught to verbalize this knowledge to members of the speech community.

The script in (7) attempts to capture the cultural value that guides Mormon parents in ensuring that their children gain their own personal testimonies. The script's title refers to children in general rather than "my children" because this value extends to all children, including the children of cultural outsiders:

Script on rearing children to have a testimony:

(7) it is good if children think something like this:

- a. many people know things like these (MPs) are true  
I want to be like these people
- b. when I hear these people say something about these things,  
I feel something good
- c. after some time, when I think about these things,  
I feel something good
- d. when I feel something good at these times,  
I know the Spirit is touching me  
I know the Spirit is saying things like this to me:  
    'The Church/Gospel is true  
    Joseph Smith was a prophet  
    Jesus lives  
    *The Book of Mormon* is true'
- e. because of this,  
I know these things (MPs) are true
- f. because of this,  
I have a testimony  
I want to bear my testimony

The different portions of this script follow logically from one to the next. The lines in (7a) express the idea that Mormon culture includes a lot of testimony bearing, and parents want their children to consider these testimonies as evidence of actual knowledge in the minds of the speakers. They also want their children to desire to become a person who holds such knowledge. (7b) shows that parents hope their children feel the Spirit (i.e., feel something good), not only when they hear the testimonies of others but also when they hear people merely talking about MPs. The lines in (7c) mean that parents hope their children feel the Spirit when they think about MPs. The lines in (7d) then describe Mormon parents' desire that their children will interpret this feeling to mean two things: this feeling is the Spirit; the Spirit is telling me "MPs are true." The lines of (7e) then follow logically from (7d). Finally, as expressed in (7f), parents hope that as a result of having gained a testimony, their children will have a desire to bear it publicly. This is because testimony bearing is a cultural requirement for becoming a valued member of the society.

Evidence for most of the content in script (7) is found in an article that was published in *Friend*, which is an LDS magazine written for young children. The article is "by Brian Dayley as told to his mother, Beth Dayley" (Dayley and Dayley 1996). Brian's age was not given, but the article said he was in elementary school. In the article Brian asks what a testimony is. To help him discover this for himself, his father suggests that he write down the things about which other people bear their testimonies in fast and testimony meeting, an idea that is influenced by (7a). In the words of Brian (as told by his mother), this was the result:

As I wrote the names and topics, a strange feeling began to grow in me. “Dad,” I whispered, “How old do you have to be to bear a testimony?”  
 “You can bear your testimony when you’re old enough to have a testimony.”  
 “Can someone my age bear his testimony?” I whispered.  
 “If a person is old enough to know what a testimony is,” Dad whispered back, “he can bear it. Children know things are true, just like grown-ups.”

Brian’s “strange feeling,” which continued to grow bigger as others bore their testimony, was described variously in the article as “funny,” “good,” and “really good.” As a result of his experience, Brian decided he wanted to bear his own testimony and did so, which caused his good feeling to grow even stronger.

This article is a good form of evidence because it was apparently written by a typical Mormon mother who wrote it using her son’s perspective. The son was no doubt guided in his telling of the story, thus influencing his perspective to become more like what his mother wanted it to be. The story was then further polished before it was published for an all-Mormon readership. I argue that this process increased its validity as a form of evidence for what Mormon values are in relation to rearing children to have a testimony. Guiding her son and polishing that story enabled Sister Dayley<sup>11</sup> to more clearly and accurately present her story in a way that matches the speech community’s collective understanding of the value related to the one I have proposed in (7).

The final script to be proposed in this chapter is shown in (8):

- (8) Script on maintaining the Church’s reputation and instilling and strengthening testimonies
- a. it is good if all people feel something good about the Church  
 it is good if,  
     because I said something, people feel something good about the Church  
     because I did something, people feel something good about the Church  
 it is good if because of these things,  
     people will want to be like me  
     people will want to know if these things (MPs) are true
  - b. many people do not know many things about the Church  
 when I say something about the Church to people like this,  
 I want them to feel something good  
 because of this,  
 I cannot say bad things about the Church to them  
 I have to say good things about the Church to them
  - c. if these people hear something bad about the Church,  
     maybe they will feel something bad about the Church  
     maybe they will not feel something good about it  
     maybe because of this they will think it is not true  
 because of this,  
     I have to say something good about the Church to them

The value expressed by (8a) attempts to account for why Mormons feel compelled to share information, such as a news article, that says good things about the Church,

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<sup>11</sup> Mormon adults are addressed by other Mormons using the titles Brother and Sister, followed by their surname. All women are addressed as Sisters, but men who hold positions of authority are addressed as Elder, Bishop, or President, depending on the position they hold.

while the values in (5c) and (8b) account for why they avoid sharing information that says what they judge to be bad things about the Church. In addition to instilling and strengthening the testimonies of other people, the script in (8) is described as a value to maintain the Church's reputation. This is directly related to instilling and strengthening testimonies because it is understood that people will only feel something good about the Church if they think it has a good reputation in all respects.

Missionary work and fellowshiping are two very important aspects of Mormon culture that the script in (8) attempts to account for. "Every member a missionary" is a fixed phrase that was coined in 1959 by Prophet McKay (cited in Monson 2013). This fixed phrase implies that all Mormons are responsible for doing missionary work at all times. "Fellowshipping" newly converted members to make sure they remain converted is also an important, frequently discussed responsibility of Mormons. All the components of the script in (8) influence both of these activities, but (8a) is related more to missionary work, while (8b–c) are related more to fellowshiping.

Active, believing Mormons see themselves as representatives of the Church. The way a Mormon lives his or her life and presents him- or herself to the world is considered to be an example of what the Church can do for people. (8a) expresses the idea that Mormons value using their words and actions to cause outsiders to want to be like them, and to consequently desire to know if MPs are true—a desire that is a prerequisite to feeling the Spirit. This puts a lot of pressure on Mormons to appear happy, perfectly well adjusted and successful. The closer to perfect their lives appear to be, the better they are able to cause outsiders to feel good about the Church.

One outcome of this attempt to appear perfect to the world at large is illustrated in the use of blogs by Mormon women to share their lives. Matchar (2011), who describes herself as an atheist feminist, said she is addicted to Mormon women blogs. She says many other non-Mormons are "similarly riveted by the shiny, happy domestic lives of their Latter-day Saint sisters." Matchar goes on to say:

Of course, the larger question is, are these women's lives really as sweet and simple as they appear? Blogs have always been a way to mediate and prettify your own life; you'd be a fool to compare your real self to someone else's carefully arranged surface self. And Mormons are particularly famous for their "put on a happy face" attitude. The church teaches that the Gospel is the only authentic path to true happiness.

...The bloggers I read may be as happy with their lot as they seem. Or not. While some Mormon women prosper under the cultural norms for wife- and mother-dom, others chafe. Utah is, after all, the state with the highest rate of prescription antidepressant use, a statistic the president of the Utah Psychiatric Association attributes to the pressure among Mormon women to be ideal wives and mothers.

This pressure on Mormons to appear ideal and perfect is something that has been discussed a lot by both Mormons and non-Mormons. The Church markets itself with paid advertisements that depict happy Mormon families. Church leaders teach that the Church is the only source of true happiness (e.g., Goasling 1986). I think the belief that full and true happiness comes only from the Church causes members of the Mormon community, driven by the values in (8a–b), to work at presenting themselves as always truly happy to both cultural insiders and outsiders. This is because they think the way they appear to people is a direct reflection on the Church,

as if they need to become real-life, picture-perfect advertisements for the Church. I am not suggesting that Mormons are not actually happy (many are and many are not); in fact pretending to be happy can work to make one happy. Rather I am suggesting that the values in (8a–b) cause Mormons to feel a need to appear happy at all times to all people.

(8b) shows that Mormons feel they must say only good, and no bad things, about the Church in order to make people feel good about it. This is especially true in relation to children, non-Mormons, and newly converted Mormons, which is who the first line of (8b) refers to. (8c) refers to such people hearing someone challenge or criticize Mormon beliefs. This could challenge a Mormon's testimony or prevent a non-Mormon from gaining one, so a Mormon will feel compelled to counter this by saying something that will make the person feel something good about the Church. As pointed out above, this makes sense since feelings are the ultimate form of evidence for the truth of MPs.

The values in (8b–c) are what lie behind the phrase “milk before meat” which Mormons have adopted to refer to teaching someone something only when they are ready for it. Mormon children and new church members will know some things about the Church, but not as much as an adult who was born and raised in the Church and who is known to have a strong testimony. Mormons will judge which Mormon beliefs are appropriate to mention or not based on how much they think the hearer can handle and still feel good about the Church. For example, when talking with someone who is judged to have a very strong testimony and know a lot about the Church, it would be acceptable to discuss the Church's teaching that God was once a mortal human like us, and that worthy Church members who obey all the commandments will eventually become Gods who create and populate their own worlds (Lund 1982). However, this would not be appropriate to raise as a topic of discussion with a non-Member, and perhaps not with a new convert. The idea is that they would not be ready to hear this and it would therefore cause them to feel something bad about the Church.

I showed in Sect. 3 that Mormon boys are commanded to serve missions but that Mormons say that missions are voluntary. The values in (8b–c) account for this because Mormons understand that outsiders will not feel good about the Church if they are told that Mormon boys are commanded by the prophets and pressured by the community to serve 2-year, self-financed missions for the Church.

## 5 Conclusions and Discussion

This paper defined some Mormon-specific terms and presented cultural scripts which are proposed to articulate LDS cultural values related to CVE. The socio-pragmatic knowledge articulated in these scripts accounts for a number of common speech acts among Mormons. The scripts explain why Mormons frequently bear their testimonies to each other. They account for why Mormons avoid saying or hearing/reading bad things about the LDS Church, even when they know these things are true. The scripts explain why Mormons feel compelled to counter any bad

statements about the Church with good statements, or at the very least try to discredit the bad statements. This is because Mormons place a high value on causing everyone to gain a testimony by experiencing the Mormon-specific form of CVE, or feeling the Spirit, which is believed to cause people to know MPs. Because the ultimate form of evidence for MPs is CVE (i.e., feeling the Spirit), and because this is an emotional feeling, Mormons place a high value on speaking and acting in ways that cause both cultural insiders and outsiders to feel good things about the Church. The scripts further explain why most Mormons are able to maintain a testimony regardless of what types of counter evidence they encounter.

My goal was to write scripts that Mormons would agree express their values. However, the goal was not to write a paper that Mormons would like. In order to show how the cultural scripts cause Mormons to avoid saying things about the Church that may cause people to feel something bad about it, I gave some examples that Mormons would not want people (especially non-Mormons) to hear or read. This is because the inclusion of this information (i.e., information about the Egyptian papyri, God's cursing a group of white-skinned people with black skin, and the Mormon doctrine that God was once a man and that men can become Gods) clashes with the value of causing people to feel good things about the Church.

Future studies could also look at other things that are directly or indirectly related to Mormon CVE. In addition to speech acts, nonlinguistic behavior and paralinguistic features would also be worth examining. For example, there are certain voice qualities and prosody that are regularly used by Mormons, especially church leaders, when they give talks and bear their testimonies. Mormons equate this way of speaking with authority—in fact the Church's leaders are called "General Authorities" or "The Brethren"—and the way they speak triggers Mormons to feel the Spirit. Readers can listen to the voice quality and prosody of Prophet Monson (2013) when he opened the October 2013 General Conference announcing that the Church had just reached 15 million members and reminded members of the requirement to do missionary work, citing the phrase that originally came from Prophet McKay: "every member a missionary." His pauses and pitch drops are especially note-worthy, interspersed with lengthened pitch plateaus.

Future studies could also look at music, which works to evoke emotional feelings, and is an important part of Mormon life—the Mormon Tabernacle Choir is world famous. And of course, Mormon-specific images also play a part in evoking feelings that are interpreted as Mormon CVE. It is also worth noting that emotions are relatively strong and frequently felt by Mormons, especially women, and as a result they appear to cry much more frequently than the average cultural outsider. I am referring especially to the crying that occurs while speaking about Church-related matters. It would be worthwhile to conduct research that focused on these types of nonlinguistic and paralinguistic features in Mormon culture—any such studies would complement the present one.

It would also be worthwhile to pursue further research studies similar to this one that focused on the CVE and related cultural values that are linked to the patriotic nationalism of a given country's citizens, or to the beliefs of other religious communities. This would enable us to discover whether there are certain values



and behavioral traits that appear to be universally associated with CVE. Additional, complementary research that focuses on the use of paralinguistic features, music and imagery in these communities would also be worth conducting, since these things are probably used by all such speech communities in relation to their specific cases of CVE.

The different forms of CVE that exist to varying degrees in all cultures are likely to share some of the characteristics described in this chapter. The common characteristic which is probably most relevant to maintaining a speech community's shared beliefs is the value of using feelings-based intuitive thoughts rather than rational, analytical thoughts in relation to those shared beliefs. There is evidence to suggest that shared beliefs are strengthened and maintained by the existence of a cultural value which promotes thinking about these shared beliefs intuitively. Shen-hav et al. (2011) found evidence of a positive correlation between belief in God and people's favoring an intuitive style of thinking over a reflective style. Gervais and Norenzayan (2012, p. 493) explained the existence of these two types of thinking in terms of two separate systems:

According to dual-process theories of human thinking, there are two distinct but interacting systems for information processing. One (System 1) relies upon frugal heuristics yielding intuitive responses, while the other (System 2) relies upon deliberative analytic processing. Although both systems can at times run in parallel, System 2 often overrides the input of System 1 when analytic tendencies are activated and cognitive resources are available.

Gervais and Norenzayan said that in addition to there being a positive correlation between intuitive thinking and religious belief, there is evidence that the triggering of analytical thinking actually encourages a disbelief in God. It therefore makes sense that, by placing a high value on intuitive thinking, cultural pressures may work to discourage individuals from analytically thinking their way out of the community's shared belief system.

Although these studies looked at religious belief, I suspect that the same phenomena likely apply similarly to nationalistic, political, and economic beliefs. If so, then case studies similar to this one which look at CVE-related cultural values in a variety of speech communities in relation to a variety of beliefs would help us understand how cultural pressures work to maintain collective irrational beliefs.

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# Rituals of Death as Staged Communicative Acts and Pragmemes

Mohammad Ali Salmani Nodoushan

**Abstract** Building on Mey's (2001) notion of pragmatic acts and Capone's (2010a) thoughts on rituals of death, this chapter borrows ideas from Mey and Capone to address its main claim that death rituals in Iran are pragmatic acts that fit well in the frame of pragmemes as well as staged communicative acts (SCAs). It addresses the rituals of death in the Shiite population of Iran and categorizes the speech acts produced in such rituals into the three categories of language addressed to God, language addressed to the deceased, and language addressed to the grieved relatives of the deceased. Providing samples of speech from all of these situations, the chapter then analyzes them in the framework of staged and conventional speech acts and pragmemes. It compares Shia funerary rites and Catholic death rituals, and concludes that Capone's (2010a) treatment of the rituals of death as pragmemes is valid. The chapter argues that funerary rites in Iran function on a psychological plane that aims at providing solace for the grieved relatives of the deceased as well as a social plane that aims at enhancing collective social intentionality.

**Keywords** Funerary rites · Pragmemes · Brute facts · Conventional speech acts · Mourning · Societal linguistics

## 1 Introduction

Rituals of death—also known as funerary rites—are considered by some linguists and anthropologists to be social events of a more or less religious nature (see Capone 2010a; Herat 2014; Sahoo 2014) in that they involve wide use of religious texts and rites. The people who attend mourning rites have in essence attended a re-

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ligious ritual and, as such, are by default expected to behave in predefined ways that have been dictated by social as well as religious conventions and teachings. Death rituals are so conventional in nature that one can safely hypothesize that the speech acts performed as part of such rites can clearly be marked by a vivid “pretense” in speakers’ utterances on which the hearers are thought to, or in fact do, collude with the utterers by responding in kind. Therefore, the speech acts performed in such rites fit well in the frame of staged communicative acts (SCAs) described by Clark (1996) as well as ostensible speech acts (OSAs) described by Isaacs and Clark (1990) and Salmani Nodoushan (1995, 2006, 2014); they also qualify as “pragmemes” described by Mey (2001) and Capone (2005, 2010a, b, c).

To see whether this hypothesis is warranted, the current chapter addresses funerary rites from a sociopragmatic as well as a social-semiotic perspective. The corpus used in this study comes from the rituals of death performed by the Shia population of Iran. Before I focus on the main theme of this chapter, I will present some background information which is absolutely vital for the nonlinguist readership to understand the line of argumentation which I will follow in this chapter. I will begin with a brief historical overview of the trends in linguistics which culminated in the emergence of sociolinguistic theory and will then present a short description of what is meant by context; this chapter will then gradually move on to a description of speech acts, and a short account of pragmemes. I will then cite Capone’s (2010a, b, c) seminal papers on Catholic funerary rites in Italy as a point of departure to introduce the reader to my discussion of funerary rites in Iran.

## 2 Background

To broaden our understanding of communication in different social contexts, we need to study “sociolinguistic” phenomena—of which death rituals, as we will see below, are an extremely useful example. Such phenomena are the subject matter of sociolinguistics, and sociolinguistics has taken its roots in sociology. However, the two fields are distinct in terms of the objectives they pursue. While sociolinguistics concentrates on society for purposes of understanding language-use features in social contexts, sociology focuses on language for understanding the society and its structure (Giglioli 1972).

Although its origins date back to an earlier time, sociolinguistics began to flourish from the early 1960s. In fact, it has evolved from a context-free view of language into the treatment of language in its social context, and it can be safely claimed that the changes that have occurred in linguistic theory have resulted in the emergence of sociolinguistics. From among the early approaches to the study of language, the most systematic and elaborated one was “structuralism.” It developed out of Saussure’s (1916) conception of “*langue*” which he took to be the subject matter of linguistics. Saussure divided language into “*langage*,” “*langue*,” and “*parole*.” According to Saussure, “*le langage*” is the human innate faculty which resides inside the mind of the individual and enables him to communicate. Each person has his

own personal “*langage*,” but if they are taken together collectively, they form a “collective social competence.” The second component of Saussure’s view of language, “*la langue*,” is localized in the “limited segment of the speaking circuit where an auditory image (s) becomes associated with a concept (c).” *La langue* is the social side of language which exists in the real world outside the individual, and the individual can never create or modify it by himself/herself; rather, it exists only by virtue of a sort of “contract” or “convention” tacitly signed by all of the members of any given speech community (Saussure 1916). In other words, *la langue* exists perfectly only within a social collectivity—and this is what this chapter attempts to show in relation to death rituals. *La parole* (i.e., speech) is always “individual,” and the individual is always its subject matter. It is an individual, willful, and intelligent act composed of (1) the combination by which the speaker uses *la langue*’s code and (2) the psychophysical mechanism that allows him/her to externalize these combinations; as such, it is roughly similar to “performance” in the Chomskyan tradition.

Soon after Saussure’s ideas were publicized, structuralism (mainly practiced by the Prague school of linguistics) decided to approach the study of language from Saussure’s perspective, and therefore considered it necessary to bother with the study of actual speech in social interactions. Structuralists found it fruitful to analyze the homogeneous, abstract, and invariant rules of language on the basis of the linguistic intuitions of a few informants. Their main aim was to elaborate on context-free grammatical rules that could account for that part of linguistic behavior which they saw as uniform and homogeneous. They, therefore, viewed language variation as some unimportant random deviation from a norm.

Their view of language came under heavy attack by Chomsky (1959) who, in his review of B. F. Skinner’s *Verbal Behavior*, introduced a different conception of linguistic competence. Chomsky’s views had a great impact and resulted in a major development in formal linguistics. In his notion of linguistic competence, Chomsky introduced Saussure’s notion of “*la langue*” with greater emphasis on the homogeneity of language knowledge. For him, linguistics was the study of a homogeneous speech community where everyone speaks alike, and where all speakers/hearers are ideal in the sense that they are not bound by time, fatigue, psychological feelings, etc. According to the Chomsky of those days, the data of linguistics are not the utterances of the individual. They are rather the individual’s intuitions about language.

Seen in these lights, formal linguistics was not concerned with social patterns in language use. It excluded the study of speech and social behavior (Fishman 1971). On the basis of formal linguistics, therefore, one would conclude that a person endowed with mere linguistic competence would only know the grammatical rules of his language. He would not know when to speak, which sociolinguistic options to select, and on what occasion. In this connection, Chomsky and Halle (1968) and the authors in Bach and Harms, eds. (1968) tried to prepare a description of language system. They focused on the formalization of universal grammatical rules in their description of competence. Having no relevance to the explanation of the social basis of verbal behavior, this formalization used categorical rules as a describing tool. These rules were quite abstract, invariant, and independent of social influences. They did not heed such things as class, status, and other stratifications. They

did not respond to stylistic shifts either. According to Wardhaugh (1986), they were not subject to variation. This mere use of categorical rules for linguistic description implied the formal linguists' lack of concern with social aspects of language, but this soon came under attack by anthropologists and sociolinguists.

## 2.1 *Early Steps Towards Meaning*<sup>1</sup>

The introduction of Chomsky's (1957) transformational generative grammar (TGG) in the late 1950s along with its strong emphasis on the independence of language from social effects paved the way for the emergence and evolution of a strong opposition group which consisted of anthropologists and sociolinguists who, in contrast to Chomsky, emphasized the role which factors such as the ethnography of communication, the description of language functions, and context could play in the correct understanding as well as interpretation of speech (Salmani Nodoushan 1995). For one thing, Firth (1957) introduced the notion of "contextuality" to help him shift towards the incorporation of social factors in the analysis of language; he argued that language ripped from its context has no meaning. Following Firth, the Prague linguists, too, shifted towards the adoption of a similar stance in their investigation of language (Dittmar 1976). This gave birth to sociolinguistics, which is in fact the offspring of the process of transition from structuralism to contextualism (Salmani Nodoushan 1995).

Sociolinguistic theory challenged linguistic theory and emphasized that verbal messages needed to be appropriate to the context in which they were used. For one thing, Gumperz and Hymes (1972) suggested that this new theory posits a level of rule-governed verbal behavior beyond the grammar, and that it relates linguistic and social constraints. Doughty et al. (1972) were more radical, and argued that the constraints on what we say and the way in which we say it are of a social origin—an idea that can be vividly seen in Mey's (2001) view of pragmatic acts and pragmemes (see Sect. 3 below). They even went on to admit that "speakers do not have a direct acquaintance with language any more than they do with society. What they actually experience is the linguistic manifestation of relationships" (Doughty et al. 1972, p. 83).

This upsurge of interest in the social aspects of language spurred linguists to move beyond the mere formal analysis of grammatical systems. As a result of this, they set out to concentrate on the language use by social groups, social strata, geographical regions, and so forth. They began to investigate socially patterned variations in people's linguistic behavior and tried to identify the factors that could affect and predict such variations. As such, sociolinguists sought to delineate the variable rules which could describe socially loaded linguistic forms. The validity of Chomsky's concept of linguistic competence—as well as that of any other descriptive method

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<sup>1</sup> See also Sbisà (2013) in Capone, Lo Piparo, and Carapezza (eds.).

that ruled out any concern for variation and diversity in language—was called into question, and its flaws paved the way for the conception and the birth of the more comprehensive notion of “communicative competence” introduced by Hymes, who argued that communication is governed not only by fixed linguistic rules but also by a wealthy repertoire of psychological, social, and pragmatic strategies (Hymes 1974). This resulted in a new perspective on “context” which now included an “interpersonal” plane and a “social” plane.

## 2.2 *What Is Context?*

As stated above, sociolinguistic theory sharply contrasted linguistic theory and argued in favor of the appropriateness of verbal messages in context; as Gumperz (1982) and Hymes (1974) noted, this new theory posited a level of rule-governed verbal behavior—beyond the level of grammar—which linked linguistic and social constraints together, and which led to Hymes’s conception of communicative competence; it held that communication is a two-step process in which the speakers first evaluate the social context of speech and then select the right linguistic forms from a rich repertoire of communicative options available for encoding their intents (Hymes 1974). It conjectures linguistic variability and argues that a stock of linguistic forms exists which can be put to use to express the same concept. The competent speaker’s job is to choose, from among the many forms available in his/her linguistic stock, the “most appropriate” linguistic form for any given communicative purpose. In doing so, the competent speaker draws on his/her knowledge of the sociolinguistic “context” in which the linguistic utterance is to be embedded; this is in fact the knowledge of the elements of speech situations designated by the famous acronym SPEAKING (Wolfson 1989), where S stands for setting (i.e., the time, place, physical circumstances, and psychological setting or scene), P refers to participants (i.e., speaker, addressor, hearer, and addressee), E stands for the ends (i.e., purpose, outcomes, and goals), A refers to act sequences (i.e., message content and message form), K refers to keys (i.e., manner/spirit in which something is said), I signifies instrumentalities (i.e., channels and forms), N has to do with norms (i.e., norms of interaction and interpretation),<sup>2</sup> and G refers to genres (i.e., categories of communication). Working in the same tradition, Dittmar (1976) suggested that linguistic code could not be the only component of communicative competence, and that it also included a wealth of psychological, social, and pragmatic strategies. This was supported by Rivers who argued that communicative competence arms competent speakers with what they need “to know to be able to communicate effectively in culturally significant settings” (Rivers 1981, p. 84).

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<sup>2</sup> This has a direct bearing on pragmemes as discussed below.



### 2.3 *The Birth of Pragmatics*

The emphasis on the role of context as well as the psychological, social, and pragmatic strategies that affect language use led to the emergence of a new field in linguistics which was called “pragmatics.” Ever since its birth in the 1970s, pragmatics has been a significant area of linguistics. It has roughly been defined as:

... the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication. (Crystal 1985, p. 240)

Pragmatics was born out of the abstractions of philosophy rather than of the descriptive needs of linguistics. It is therefore not surprising to see that its focus has been on an area between semantics, sociolinguistics, and extralinguistic context, and it is because of this that the boundaries between pragmatics and other areas were not determined precisely at the time of its advent (Leech 1983; Wierzbicka 2003).

Soon after the advent of pragmatics, people working in the field sought to propose many derivative terms for the classification of the wide range of subject matters involved in it; they hoped that their proposed terms would introduce order and precision to pragmatics and would resolve some of its oddities. For one thing, Leech drew on the term “pragmalinguistics” to refer to the study of “the more linguistic end of pragmatics—where we consider the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions (namely, the speech act performed by an utterance)” (1983, p. 11). He also suggested the term “sociopragmatics”<sup>3</sup> to refer to the “sociological interface of pragmatics” (1983, p. 10). As Leech argues, sociopragmatics is the study of the way in which conditions on language use derive from the social situation. Along the same lines, Thomas (1983) used “sociolinguistic miscommunication” or “pragmatic failure” to refer to the situation in which a speaker’s inadequate communicative competence fails to produce wrong communicative effects through the faulty use of “speech acts” or any of the other “rules of speaking” (Richards et al. 1992). According to Thomas, pragmatic failure (be it pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic) occurs any time a speaker is unable to understand what is meant by what is said. Pragmalinguistic failure is related to the linguistic side of the utterance where the speaker fails to create the intended pragmatic effect (e.g., mistaking a request for an information question); by way of contrast, sociopragmatic failure has to do with knowing what to say and whom to say it to, and has to do with social and contextual appropriateness. In other words, it has to do with intentionality in that it links utterances to speakers’ intentions and gives prominence to the concept of speech acts.

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<sup>3</sup> See also Mey (2001).

## 2.4 *Speech Acts*

The term “speech act” designates any “communicative activity” which can be defined with reference to “the intentions” of a speaker while speaking, and the “effects” it can achieve on a hearer (Crystal 1992). As such, speech acts find meaning in the light of interpersonal context. They build on the notion that forms of language generally serve certain communicative functions. An example is in order here:

Farhad, a university professor, is invited to join a party where some of his friends are invited too. He joins the party along with his wife, Tayebeh. Upon arriving at the party venue, friends greet him asking:

A FRIEND: Welcome. How are you? Are you having a good time in life?

FARHAD: Oh thanks. I feel good. Actually, I feel as if I am in Heaven even when I am in Hell provided that Tayebeh is with me.

Upon hearing this response, some of the other ladies present at the party turn to their husbands and say:

WOMEN: Learn from Farhad; look how he is complimenting and praising his wife.

At this time, Tayebeh gets furious and complains:

TAYEBEH: You don't know this man; he did not praise me. He insulted me; he means I am much worse than Hell, so much so that when he goes to Hell with me, Hell is like Heaven for him when it is compared to me.

This example illustrates how an utterance can be “equivocal” in that it is open to different interpretations, all of which are plausible on the basis of the interpersonal context which holds between the speaker and the different hearers. While Farhad's utterance is interpreted as a compliment by all the women present at the party, it is taken as an insult by Farhad's wife, Tayebeh. This shows how an utterance can potentially achieve different effects on different listeners. The example also implies that speech acts can be quite “equivocal” in their communicative functions—an idea that is part and parcel of any discussion of “staged communicative acts” (Anolli 2002) as well as “ostensible speech acts” (Isaacs and Clark 1990; Salmani Nodoushan 1995, 2006; Clark 1996)—I will return to this below.

Speech acts are a series of communicative elements which serve a specific purpose and intent; they combine to create what was traditionally called communication. They are purposive and functional in that they are designed to have some effect on the environment, on hearers, and on speakers. They are the tools that make communication possible. For instance, a person who needs to find the address to a place may use a “requestive speech act” to “ask for information,” and then the addressee may use an “assertive” speech act to provide the requested information; the two acts work in tandem to create an “act sequence” which makes communication between the two parties possible.

Communication itself is the transmission as well as the reception of information between a signaler and a receiver (Crystal 1992); it is the exchange of ideas, information, etc. between two or more persons. Austin (1962) argues that information transmitted in communication is nothing but a sequence of “performative

utterances” or a series of speech or communicative acts used in a systematic way to accomplish certain communicative purposes; the nature of such utterances, as Austin sees them, is “performative” rather than “constative” in that their meanings are identified with the performance of an action. He argues that such acts have their own well-recognized structural features, and yet they all possess a share of the nature of actions in that the same utterance could at the same time constitute three kinds of acts:

- a. A locutionary act (or locution): The semantics of an utterance (i.e., its sense–reference relations or linguistic meaning)
- b. An illocutionary act (or illocution): The act performed in, or by virtue of, the performance of the illocution (i.e., its pragmatic meaning)
- c. A perlocutionary act (or perlocution): The act performed by means of what is said (i.e., the effect achieved or pragmatic effect)

Austin (1962) considered the second of these acts to be the most important and gave more weight to it. The illocution, as Austin sees it, has performative value owing to the fact that it employs performative verbs. He also suggested that the locution belongs to the traditional territory of truth-based semantics, whereas the perlocution belongs strictly beyond the investigation of language and meaning due to the fact that it deals with the results or effects of an utterance.

Searle (1969) expatiated upon Austin’s ideas and brought greater systematicity to them. He eloquently argued that meaning is in essence a kind of “doing,” and suggested that the study of language should just be considered as a subpart of the theory of action. Searle crystallized the concepts of illocutionary act and illocutionary force to the extent where it is reasonably possible to speak of Searle’s “speech act theory” as the classical account which functions as a point of departure for subsequent works on speech acts. Based on the arguments made by Austin<sup>4</sup> (1962) and Searle (1969), the speech act theory—as we know it today—is in practice a reference to illocutionary acts.

Later in the early 1980s, Searle (1981) identified four felicity conditions or rules for the effective performance of any given speech act:

- a) Propositional Content Rules: specify the kind of meaning expressed by the propositional part of an utterance (i.e., sense–reference meaning)
- b) Preparatory Rules: delineate the conditions which are prerequisite to the performance of the speech act
- c) Sincerity Rules: outline the conditions which must be obtained if the speech act is to be performed sincerely
- d. Essential Rules: specify what the speech act must conventionally count as.

He draws on these rules to distinguish between different speech acts. His rules establish a system for the classification of speech acts, and Searle (1979) himself uses them to propose five classes of speech acts (cf. Leech and Thomas 1985, p. 179):

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<sup>4</sup> For a fuller discussion of Austin’s theory of speech acts, please see Mey (2001).

1. Assertives: commit S(peaker) to the truth of some proposition
2. Directives: count as attempts to bring about some effect through the action of hearer (H)
3. Expressives: count as the expression of some psychological state
4. Commissives: commit speaker (S) to some future action
5. Declaratives: are speech acts whose “successful” performance brings about the correspondence between the propositional content and reality.

Searle’s (1979) classification was in fact inspired by Karl Bühler’s (1934) famous “Organon model” as well as Jakobson’s (1960) taxonomy of “communication functions.” Bühler, in a discussion of his Organon model, suggested that language is mainly used to fulfill three major communication functions, and that these communication functions, in turn, can explain linguistic communication: (1) *Ausdrucksfunktion* or the expressive function, (2) *Darstellungsfunktion* or the representation function, and (3) *Appellfunktion* or the conative/appealing function. Bühler’s taxonomy of functions was hailed by Jakobson (1960), who expatiated on Bühler’s Organon model in his own description of effective acts of communication, and added the poetic, phatic, and metalingual functions to the Organon model; the resulting model of communication functions included six communicative functions, each of which had an associated factor:

1. *Metalingual*: This function focuses on the code/language itself; it aims at decoding the code. Alternative names for this function are “metalinguistic” and “reflexive”.
2. *Expressive*: This function is sometimes called “emotive” or “affective.” It expresses addresser’s internal states; it is speaker oriented in the sense that it carries the speaker’s intentions and expresses his/her internal states (e.g., interjections, sound changes, etc.). It is roughly similar to Austin’s conception of the illocutionary force.
3. *Conative*: It directly engages the hearer/addressee, and is therefore hearer oriented (e.g., summoning, address forms, imperatives, vocatives, etc.).
4. *Poetic*: This function focuses on the “message” itself; it shows how the code itself operates in poetry and slogans (in terms of aesthetics and style).
5. *Phatic*: This includes fillers and phatic communion. Its job is to keep the channel of communication open. It has to do with the use of language for the sake of “interaction” and is normally associated with the Contact/Channel factor (e.g., greetings, casual discussions of the weather, etc.). Its job is to provide the keys to open, maintain, verify, or close the communication channel. As such, it is hearer-focused in the sense that it is normally used to fulfill a social purpose (e.g., to emphasize the hearer’s belonging to the speaker’s in-group).
6. *Referential*: This is roughly similar to Austin’s locutionary force. Its job is to describe a mental state, a situation, or an object. As such, it corresponds to the factor of “context” in communication, and includes definite descriptions and deictic expressions.

Several other scholars have also attempted to classify speech acts, and some of the resulting taxonomies used nonlinguistic theoretical classificatory principles. For one thing, as Salmani Nodoushan (2013, 2014) noted, Kissine (2013) suggested three theoretical principles for the classification of speech acts: (1) speech acts as conventional actions (e.g., naming a ship), (2) speech acts as expressions of mental states (e.g., expressing hate), and (3) speech acts as linguistic actions (e.g., describing rules of grammar). Kissine's classification of speech acts seems to have been inspired by, or driven from, Halliday's (1994) treatment of language "metafunctions" (i.e., interpersonal, textual, and ideational—both logical and experiential) in his famous systemic functional linguistics (SFL). Although Halliday himself does not claim to be a pragmaticist, his taxonomy of metafunctions is directly related to our understanding of speech acts. Halliday approaches the study of language from a functional and semantic perspective—and not from a formal and syntactic one. As such, his view of language deviates from the traditional structural views. He argues that both the emergence of grammar and the specific forms that grammars take can best be explained in terms of the specific functions that language has evolved to serve. He does not totally discard the claims that languages and cultures are diverse, but argues that all languages have been shaped to serve three metafunctions, each of which is a "systemic cluster" in that it consists of "clusters of semantic systems" which make meanings of a related kind which are then mapped onto the structure of the clause.

The *interpersonal* metafunction is responsible for controlling interpersonal communication and relations; it suggests that, in addition to construing experience, language simultaneously acts out "the interpersonal encounters that are essential to our survival" (Halliday 2003, p. 16); they can range from micro-encounters in everyday life (e.g., greetings, asking for direction, etc.) to macro-encounters or institutionalized relationships (e.g., marriage rituals, funerary rites, etc.). Taken together, micro- and macro-encounters work in tandem to create a social bond. Mood (e.g., optative, indicative, subjunctive, etc.), modality, and polarity go hand in hand to create the grammatical systems that fulfill the interpersonal metafunction (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004).

The *ideational metafunction* consists of "experiential" and "logical" functions and pertains to the "propositional" side of communication. It has to do with the building as well as maintaining of "propositions" that eventually coalesces into a theory of experience, and it is because of this very nature of the ideational metafunction that it has also received the alternative name "propositional" metafunction. This metafunction has to do with the semantics of language and forms its conceptual part. One of the functions in the ideational metafunction is the experiential function which refers to the grammatical choices which enable us to make meanings about the world inside us as well as the world in which we live. It determines how language can be put to use to construe an abstract model of experience (Halliday 1994). As Halliday (2003, pp. 15–16) argues:

Most obviously, perhaps, when we watch small children interacting with the objects around them we can see that they are using language to construe a theoretical model of their experience. This is language in the experiential function; the patterns of meaning are installed

in the brain and continue to expand on a vast scale as each child, in cahoots with all those around, builds up, renovates and keeps in good repair the semiotic “reality” that provides the framework of day-to-day existence and is manifested in every moment of discourse, spoken or listened to. We should stress, I think, that the grammar is not merely annotating experience; it is construing experience.

In other words, the experiential function envisages language as the end product of humans attempts at making meaning from experience; as such, it clearly shows the influence of Benjamin Lee Whorf on Halliday’s view of language. The “logical” function—which is the second function found inside the ideational metafunction—is responsible for setting up logical–semantic relationships (i.e., taxis and logico-semantic relations) between different clausal units (e.g., subordination, coordination, etc.).

In Halliday’s view, it is the *textual* metafunction that allows language users to delicately combine the experiential and the interpersonal metafunctions which, in turn, makes it possible for them to “put any interactional ‘spin’ on any representational content” (Halliday 2003, p. 17); its object is language itself. In Halliday’s view, the textual metafunction encompasses and exhausts all of the grammatical systems (i.e., Theme, Given and New, and Cohesion) which make the smooth flow of discourse possible. It gives language the “texture” that is vital for the creation of “coherent” and “cohesive” texts. It “creates a semiotic world of its own: a parallel universe, or “virtual reality” in modern terms” (Halliday 2001, p. 276).

Another taxonomy of speech acts was proposed by Isaacs and Clark (1990) who came up with two types of speech acts (i.e., genuine versus ostensible) in their study of invitations. Based on the findings of their research, they argued in favor of the existence of a new class of speech acts which they referred to as ostensible speech acts (OSAs). OSAs are utterances that may take the linguistic “form” of a compliment, a request, an invitation, and so forth, but that undoubtedly function “off the record” for some other, usually unstated purpose (Walton 1998). Therefore, it is sheer naivety to judge them on the basis of the apparent “form” they have taken; rather, their correct interpretation has to do with the “off record” purpose they are produced to fulfill. Isaacs and Clark (1990) and Clark (1996) considered OSAs as acts that speakers perform in a nonserious way, and argued that such acts are successful only if hearers can clearly recognize their nonserious nature. It is left to the hearers to infer the speakers’ intentions. OSAs are an important part of language in that speakers quite frequently avoid making their thoughts explicit for hearers and only expect hearers to infer their beliefs and attitudes (Brown and Levinson 1987; Sperber and Wilson 1995; Gibbs 2000). With a closer look at the structure of OSAs, Isaacs and Clark (1990) realized that OSAs possess two layers: (a) a formal layer (also called a top layer) where a speech act having the appearance of a genuine speech act is performed, and (b) a functional layer (also called a bottom layer) where both the speaker and the hearer mutually recognize the pretense, “take collusive action” towards each other, and understand that the top layer is nothing but a “sincere” and “transparent” pretense (see also Salmani Nodoushan 1995, 2006, 2014).

Needless to say, OSAs should not be confused with other forms of the staged communicative acts (SCAs), which were described by Clark (1996). Like OSAs, SCAs are pretentious and make an outward and usually exaggerated or deniable

show (e.g., speech used in death rituals), but unlike OSAs, they may be evasive or deceptive (e.g., lies, hyperboles, ironies, etc.). As such, they may be intended for either communication or miscommunication; unlike OSAs, SCAs certainly lack “ambivalence” and therefore cannot be accepted as OSAs. As Anolli (2002) argues, “pretense” is the only key ingredient and distinctive feature in SCAs, while OSAs require both “transparent pretense” and “ambivalence” to function properly. SCAs may even be ambiguous and enjoy “equivocation,” but what is certain is that they do not enjoy “ambivalence.” As Bavelas et al. (1990) have noted, speakers are likely to use equivocal language when they have to face with an avoidance–avoidance conflict (e.g., confrontations). Nevertheless, the use of imprecise, ambiguous, and equivocal cues (e.g., nonverbal deception cues, hesitation, and latency of response, etc.) is allowed in OSAs only if they do not block hearers’ easy perception of the “pretense” and speakers’ intended “ambivalence” (Hamilton and Mineo 1998).

## 2.5 *Speech Situations and Speech Events*

Closely related to the concept of speech acts is the distinction between “speech situation,” “speech event,” and “speech act.” Hymes (1972) has perhaps suggested the best distinction; he argues that although one may find many situations associated with speech within a community (e.g., meals, parties, etc.), in and of themselves these situations are not necessarily governed by consistent rules. A simple relabeling of them in terms of speech will not do much either. It is on this ground that Hymes (1972) suggests that the term “speech event” be strictly used to refer to any activity that is directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech (e.g., private conversations, class lectures, etc.). In Levinson’s view, a speech event is a “culturally recognized social activity in which language plays a specific, and often rather specialized, role” (1983, p. 279). As such, a speech act is a “functional” unit in communication—roughly similar to what Mey (2001) and Capone (2005, 2006, 2008) refer to as “pragmeme.” It is the minimal unit of analysis conditioned by rules of “conduct” and “interpretation” (Hymes 1972). If “phoneme” is defined as the minimal unit of sound, and “morpheme” as the minimal unit of meaning, then, by way of analogy, a minimal unit of pragmatics can be called “pragmeme.”

## 3 Pragmemes

As stated earlier, context is either interpersonal or social. A speech act was traditionally defined in terms of interpersonal context. If the focus of attention is shifted to social context, does the term speech act remain valid? Mey’s (2001) “pragmatic act theory”—which I will briefly describe in this section—is an attempt at answering this question.

Mey's (2001) "pragmatic act theory" can be traced back to the sociocultural-interactive line of research which "has resulted in societal-centered theories where interpretation goes from-the-outside-in (holistic) and less attention is paid to the proposition expressed" (Kecskes 2013, p. 38). The pragmatic act theory emphasizes the priority of sociocultural and societal factors in the construction and comprehension of meaning. Mey (2001) challenges the traditional speech act theory on the ground that it lacks a theory of action, and that, even if it does, it is individual centered rather than being society centered. In describing his "pragmatic act theory," Mey (2006, p. 542) eloquently argues:

The theory of pragmatic acts does not explain human language use starting from the words uttered by a single, idealized speaker. Instead, it focuses on the interactional situation in which both speakers and hearers realize their aims. The explanatory movement is from the outside in, one could say, rather than from the inside out: instead of starting with what is said, and looking for what the words could mean, the situation where the words fit is invoked to explain what can be (and is actually being) said.

The theory suggests that speech acts must be "situated" if they aim to be effective; they have to "both rely on, and actively create, the situation in which they are realized...there are no speech acts, but only situated speech acts, or instantiated pragmatic acts" (Mey 2001, p. 218). For Mey, no "conversational contribution at all can be understood properly unless it is situated within the environment in which it was meant to be understood" (Mey 2001, p. 217). The natural implication of this theory is that people are "situated" in social contexts, and that social contexts and the conditions of their social lives not only empower but also limit them. Mey emphasizes that it is the situation of language use as well as extralinguistic factors such as intonation and gestures—but not wording—that define pragmatic acts. He sincerely nurtures the idea that "*a fortiori*, there are, strictly speaking, no such 'things' as speech acts *per se*, only acts of speech in a situation." He also argues that "indirect speech acts derive their force, not from their lexico-semantic buildup, but instead, from the situation in which they are appropriately uttered" (Mey 2006, p. 24). As such, in his pragmatic act theory, any act of conversation is by default a "language game" (see Salmani Nodoushan 2014) that is situated in social context; it is the social context that determines and provides the rules necessary for the construction and interpretation of meaning. According to Kecskes (2013), pragmatic acts that can cluster together to form what Mey calls "pragmemes" are "situation derived" and "situation constrained."

Mey's perspective is rooted in earlier considerations of "context" (both social and interpersonal; see Doughty et al. 1972; Hymes 1974; Dittmar 1976; Gumperz 1982; Wolfson 1989), of "felicity conditions" (Austin 1963), and the distinction between "pragmalinguistics" and "sociopragmatics" (see Leech 1983). It has also been inspired by the traditional distinction among "speech situation," "speech event," and "speech acts" (described above; see also Hymes 1972). Hymes' ideas were further developed by Mey (2001), and he formulated and expressed what he appositely called "pragmemes." He assumes that, if they want to be effective, speech acts need to be situated; they need to "both rely on,



and actively create, the situation in which they are realized” (Mey 2001, cited in Capone 2005, p. 1356). Seen in this light, it can be argued that the descriptions of felicity conditions (presented above) have a lot to do with the social roles of speech acts.

Capone (2005) drew on the concepts of speech events, felicity conditions, and social context to expatiate on Mey’s concept of pragmemes; a pragmeme is:

...a situated speech act in which the rules of language and of society combine in determining meaning, intended as a socially recognized object sensitive to social expectations about the situation in which the utterance to be interpreted is embedded. (Capone 2005, p. 1355)

Speech acts, seen from Mey’s (2001) perspective, are necessarily situated; as such, their analysis must also be situated. This emphasizes the role of (social) context in the analysis and realization of speech acts. Along the same lines, Verschueren (1999) suggested that “allowing context into linguistic analysis is...a prerequisite for precision” (cited in Capone 2005, p. 1356). For Mey (2001), context in a pragmeme is nothing but social; it encompasses the internal organization of a society, its intentions, internal differences, subgroupings, and so on (Salmani Nodoushan 2013). Moreover, the interpretation of a pragmeme cannot be based on the linguistic elements that are found in it; it comes from the “social” situation in which the pragmeme is embedded. In this connection, Mey (2001, p. 219) argues that:

The theory of pragmatic acts does not try to explain language use from the inside out, from words having their origin in a sovereign speaker and going out to an equally sovereign hearer (...). Rather, its explanatory movement is from the outside in: the focus is 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 on the situation, as well as on what is actually being said.

Mey’s perspective argues that meaning is not an innate quality of utterances; in other words, utterances are not born with meaning. Meaning is injected into them from outside, and any given speech act inherits its meaning and interpretation from the social event in which the producer of that speech act is engaged (Capone 2010a). This resonates with a point presented in by earlier work Capone (2005), and suggests that any pragmeme draws its meaning from (a) semantic rules of language, (b) pragmatic procedures for determining articulated explicatures, and (c) social conventions for linking utterances and contexts of use (see also Capone 2005; Salmani Nodoushan 2013). As such, pragmemes can be defined as “speech acts in context.” They are deeply rooted in the idea that, rather than being the representation of (linguistic/literal) meaning, the primary aim of language use is to fulfill social function (see also Malinowski 1923; Wierzbicka 2006).

A very good example of a speech event where the social function of language gains prominence over any other aspect of it is the “funerary” pragmeme. In this connection, Capone argues that:

Death is a good issue to deal with in the framework of pragmemes and societal linguistics, because it provides an area of study in which the resources of society and human languages intersect giving way to linguistic actions comprehensible only from an anthropological perspective. (2010a, p. 4)

#### 4 The Funerary Pragmeme in Italy (Catholic Rites)

In his paper on the semiotics of funerary rites in Italy, Capone dealt with “societal considerations in connection with linguistic interaction in mourning events” (2010a, p. 3). The paper eloquently expatiated on “the pragmeme of accommodation” by discussing the idea that linguistic interaction is subordinated to “providing solace to the families of the deceased” in funerary rituals; it argued that such ritual interactions draw on a social intentionality.

Capone studied funerary rites in Italy in the context of societal pragmatics in which conversation is viewed as socially contextualized language games, and rules of meaning construction and interpretation are derived from social contexts. Capone builds on Malinowski’s (1923) idea that words do not merely represent meaning; rather, their principal aim is to fulfill a social function. In discussing the idea that “much of the ritual events associated with death is subordinated to the need to overcome the negation of presence,” Capone argues that “speech events of the formal type are bound up with rules, routines, and predictability” (2010a, p. 4). Therefore, “speech acts acquire their interpretation in relation to the social events...in which they are embedded” (Capone 2010a, p. 5). Drawing on Mey’s (2001) thoughts about the explanatory inadequacy of theories of mind and language in coping with illocutionary force, Capone suggests that a theory of pragmatic acts is needed. Such a theory, instead of emphasizing the conditions and rules that control individual speech acts, characterizes “a general situational prototype, capable of being executed in a situation” and calls it a “pragmeme” (Capone 2010a, p. 5). Seen in this light, the totality of the rituals and speech associated with death is viewed as a pragmatic act and is referred to, on page 6, as the “pragmeme of accommodation,” the aim of which is to ensure that the relatives of the deceased “accommodate to the new state of affairs.”

In this pragmatic act, there are two planes of communication: (a) vertical and (b) horizontal. On the vertical plane of communication, God is addressed and a specific grace is asked; on the horizontal plane, on the other hand, social support is provided for the relatives of the deceased, the train of their thoughts is kept under control, and they are offered solace through conversation. Being institutional in nature, mourning events enforce interpretation rules; they are “prototypical events in which order is paramount” (Capone 2010a, p. 11). Moreover, “noticeable absence” from funerary rituals signifies unsatisfactory relations between the absentee and the deceased, and the rituals are “transformative devices” that provide ample slots for appeasement whereby “you enter guilty and go out having made peace with the families of the deceased, even without saying a few words, but having only pronounced the necessary ‘condolences’” (Capone 2010a, p. 11).

#### 5 The Funerary Pragmeme in Iran (Shia Rites)

Death rituals provide a typical speech event and a unique social situation where not only speech but also many other forms of action and behavior need to be framed within a really strict and somewhat frozen form of sociocultural context (Capone

2010a). In Iran, like in Catholic Italy, the formality and frozenness of such a sociocultural context are so profound that it is almost impossible to find an adequate explanation for the types of speech acts associated with this context in any of the classes of speech acts proposed by Searle (1979). Nor can any other competing taxonomies of speech acts—except for those proposed by Clark (1996) and Mey (2001)—fully accommodate and adequately explain Iranian funerary speech events.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps this lack of adequacy can be explained by the fact that almost all taxonomies of speech acts derive their classificatory principles from such linguistic boundaries and grammatical lines as “sentence,” “clause,” and so forth. There are of course a few classifications that derive their classificatory principles from certain nonlinguistic theoretical assumptions, examples of which include Isaacs and Clark’s (1990) “genuine” versus “ostensible” speech acts, Clark’s (1996) SCAs, and Mey’s (2001) pragmatic acts or pragmemes. The same is true for Kissine (2013), who proposed three classificatory principles which—as he argued—seem to have the most important theoretical implications for any comprehensive study of speech acts; according to Kissine, speech acts can function as (a) conventional actions such as naming a ship, (b) expressions of mental states such as expressing hate, or (c) linguistic actions such as describing rules of grammar. Needless to say, the clear similarity between Kissine’s treatment of speech acts and Halliday’s views about language metafunctions raises the question of whether Kissine has been under the influence of Halliday’s views or not. In another attempt in the same year, Kissine (2013, p. 29) classified speech acts on the basis of the levels of meaning which had been proposed by Austin, and argued that:

[it] seems that illocutionary acts present their content  $p$  under some mode  $\vartheta$  that is somehow analogous to a psychological mode of presentation  $\Psi$  characteristic of type of Intentional state. This does not mean that the illocutionary at [sic]  $\vartheta(p)$  indicates or expresses (at least not on the most intuitive acceptance of the term *expression*) the Intentional state  $\Psi(p)$ . . . . A phonetic act is interpreted as a phatic act whenever it conforms to a well-formed string of language mastered by the hearer. The phatic act, in turn, will be interpreted as a locutionary act when it will be understood as a representation of a propositional content under a certain mode of presentation. Finally, if an illocutionary force is attributed to the locutionary act’s content, the utterance will be interpreted as a direct illocutionary act. . . . at each level—phonetic, phatic, locutionary and illocutionary—the utterance can have causal (viz, perlocutionary) effects. The relationship between the utterance and one of these effects is what we describe by speaking of perlocutionary acts.

Although all of these taxonomies have their own strengths and perhaps weaknesses, my analysis of funerary rites in Iran reveals that funerary rituals and speech can best be explained from the perspectives suggested by Austin (1975), Strawson (1964), Clark (1996), Mey (2001), and Capone (2010a).

To recapitulate what went before, I need to emphasize that Austin (1975) drew a clear line between illocutionary acts (or speech acts) and all the other types of speech action, and that he based his argument on the very “conventional” nature of such

<sup>5</sup> For different classifications of speech acts, please see Vendler (1972); Fraser (1974); Sadock (1974, 1994); Searle (1975); Bach and Harnish (1979); McCawley (1977); Hancher (1979); Sbisà (1984); Croft (1994); Alston (2000); Zaefferer (2001).

acts. Prior to Austin, Strawson (1964) had also dichotomized between institutional (or conventional) and noninstitutional (or nonconventional) acts and had grouped all of the speech acts known by that time accordingly. It should be emphasized here that nonconventional illocutionary acts serve communicative intentions of a Gricean (1957) nature, whereas conventional or institutional speech acts are based on certain nonlinguistic protocols and conventions. Moreover, the fulfillment of institutional/conventional speech acts requires an intricate system of rules and conventions—similar to the rules of games in a Wittgensteinian (1953) sense—which, when performed in a correct way, can result in the “satisfaction” of the speech act at hand (Strawson 1964). For example, when a priest addresses the groom and the bride in a marriage ceremony and utters the cliché “With the power invested in me by God, I hereby pronounce you husband and wife,” the people who were not a legal couple prior to the performance of that speech act are transformed into a legally wed couple, and the pragmatic act of “marrying people” is thus successfully completed. As we will see below, funerary rites in Iran, too, possess such a rule system, and the rules are correctly performed (see also Salmani Nodoushan 2014) in the society to make sure that the pragmatic act of “performing death rituals” is satisfactorily executed.

Along the same lines, Bach and Harnish (1979) followed the tradition of thought which Austin (1975) and Strawson (1964) had started, and attempted to define institutional or conventional speech acts on the basis of certain “nonlinguistic” conventions. According to them, a speech act *X* can be labeled “conventional” if, and only if, both the speaker (*S*) and the hearer (*H*) agree and mutually believe that that speech act does count as *X* in a certain conventional context, and that it does so only because they both agree and mutually believe that in that type of context, any utterance of that kind counts as *X*. Kissine (2013), too, argues that conventional illocutionary acts succeed if, and only if, they count as such, and that they count as such, if, and only if, the words are uttered in what is mutually believed to be the right place, when it is mutually believed to be the right time, and by a speaker who is mutually believed to be the right person.

I need to emphasize here that these ideas were not new, and that Bach and Harnish (1979) had already suggested two general kinds of conventional or institutional speech acts which they had called “verdictives” and “effectives.” According to Bach and Harnish (1979), “verdictives” are speech acts in which a natural fact already exists, but the job of the speech act is only to map an institutional status onto the already existing natural fact. An example of this can be a judge’s utterance which sentences a criminal to life imprisonment. Seeing them in this light, I would like to refer to verdictives as “a posteriori” pragmatic acts because they are attempts at framing already existing natural facts within the frame of conventionally established and socially accepted institutions. Austin (1975) noted that verdictives can be true/false or fair/unfair due to their “a posteriori” nature. By way of contrast, effectives—which I would like to refer to as “a priori” pragmatic acts—normally happen before the fact in that there is no “institutional” or “conventional” fact until felicitous effectives are performed, and their performance, in turn, brings about new institutional facts. For instance, when someone resigns from his job, a new institutional fact is created.

Closely tied to the concept of “effective” and “verdictive” conventional speech acts is the concept of *pragmeme*—which, in a sense, encompasses both effectives and verdictives. For Capone, a *pragmeme*

...is a speech act—an utterance associated with a goal. Its intention is to bring about such-and-such effect, to modify a situation and change the roles of participants within that situation or keep the roles the same while bringing about other types of effects. (Capone 2010a, p. 5)

I would like to suggest, here, that a typical speech situation which can be considered as a *pragmeme* is that of death rites. I will argue in the following sections that funerary rites and speech, as performed by the Shiite<sup>6</sup> in Iran, provide a unique example of “*pragmemes*” (or pragmatic acts) where speech is neatly tied to both religious and social conventions and institutions. Before I discuss why I consider funerary rites as “*pragmemes*,” I need to describe the funerary context in Iran. The description presented below is based on the information which I gathered through Internet search, my personal readings, my participant observation of funeral rituals, and my interviews<sup>7</sup> with native informants.

Iran has a population of about 85 million people, and the majority of Iranians practice Shia Islam. The word “Shia” means “follower” (of Ali Ibn Abi Talib and the other Shia ‘twelvers’); it has its roots in the line of faith practiced around 1400 years ago by Muhammad’s son-in-law, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, and his followers. The Shiites believe that just as a prophet is appointed by God alone, it is only God who has the prerogative to appoint the successor to his prophet. They also believe that God chose Ali Ibn Abi Talib to be Muhammad’s successor, and that Ali Ibn Abi Talib was the infallible and the first true caliph of Islam. Ali was Muhammad’s first cousin, his son-in-law, and his closest living male relative who had married Muhammad’s daughter Fatimah. The Shia believe that after his last pilgrimage to Mecca, Muhammad ordered the gathering of Muslims at the pond of Khumm, where he nominated Ali as his divinely appointed successor. As such, Shia Islam is based on both the Quran and the message of the Islamic prophet Muhammad attested in the Hadith and recorded by the Shia clerics. This line of faith has come to be known as the “Imami” doctrine, and, in addition to Ali, the Shia have gradually extended this doctrine to eleven of Muhammad’s grandsons, each of whom is called “Imam”. Ali and the other Imams are collectively known as the ‘Shia twelvers’. The Shia believe that God has bestowed spiritual as well as political authority over the community onto the Shia twelvers, that they are infallible, that they possess divine traits, and that their speech is tantamount to the speeches of God. It is on this ground that the Shia obey the speech of God (crystallized in the verses of the Quran), and the speeches of Muhammad and the Shia twelvers (referred to as “Hadith” and collected in numerous books compiled by Shia clerics).

<sup>6</sup> “Shiite” is an adjective that describes people who believe in Shia Islam. Shia Islam is the second largest sect of Islam after Sunni Islam. For a full description, please see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shia\\_Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shia_Islam).

<sup>7</sup> Funerary rites in Sunni Islam (and other Islamic sects) are largely different from those of Shia Islam.

Hadith has it that Islam decrees that deceased people are not really dead, and that they are worthy of the same respect they had when they were alive and living on earth. This belief entails certain rights for them, which must be respected and observed by each and every member of the Shia community, and certain religious rituals of death have been suggested by God and the Shia twelvers to make sure that these rights are observed and satisfied.

Death does not always occur in the blink of an eye, and there are a lot of situations in which people lie in bed, at least for a short time, and struggle for breath before they die. This struggle is called “*Saqarat ul Mawt*” (or pain of death), and when this happens, the people around the person struggling for breath should start performing certain rituals. As such, death rituals begin even before a death has actually happened. The first thing to be done is to move the person who is struggling for breath to a position where the soles of his/her feet face the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia (where the house of God known as *Qibla* is located). The person present by the bed of the dying person should then start reciting certain Islamic phrases (known as “*Shahadah*”) which overtly testify to his/her believing in the oneness of God and the prophethood of Muhammad. He/she should also cue the *Shahadah* to the person struggling for breath and should make sure the dying person repeats the cued phrases. It is believed that this will guarantee the “salvation” of the deceased and will attract God’s favor and mercy for him/her. The dying person, whose job is to entreat God for his/her own forgiveness, should also be made to recite phrases. In the next step, the person sitting by the dying person’s bed as well as the dying person himself/herself should recite certain chapters and verses of the Quran (i.e., *Yasin*, *Wassafat*, *Ayatul Qursi*, and certain other verses) to ease the moments of death for the dying person. When the dying person passes away, the person sitting beside his/her bed should close the eyes and the mouth of the dead person, stretch the deceased’s arms along his/her sides, and straighten his/her legs. Then the body should be covered with a sheet of cloth. At this time, the deceased’s father or his/her next of kin should be informed of the death. The person sitting by the dead body should keep reading the Quran until people arrive to take the body to a cemetery for burial. It should be remembered that the father of the deceased or a next of kin or someone named by the deceased in his/her will should be in charge of the rest of the rituals of death; other people can do the rituals only if they receive prior permission from the dead person’s father or next of kin or the person named in the will. It should be emphasized here that the rituals of death, which include the three steps of washing or “*ghusl*,” shrouding<sup>8</sup> or “*kafan*,” and burying or “*dafan*,” are obligatory (or *wajib*) and must be performed, or else the deceased will not be saved. Islam has decreed that it is essential for every individual to learn how to perform them, but it “suffices” if one or more people undertake to do it—which will, in turn, result in other individuals’ being absolved from this religious obligation. This kind of religious obligation is called “*kifai wajib*” (meaning “sufficient obligation”) because its performance by some people absolves others from performing it. Nevertheless,

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<sup>8</sup> Three pieces of cloth are obligatorily used for dead males, and five obligatory pieces for females; there are several other optional pieces as well.

there are many other rituals in Islam (e.g., daily prayers, fasting in Ramadan, jihad, etc.) that are “wajib” for each and every individual, and from which no one can ever be absolved; this latter category of religious obligations is referred to as “aini wajib” (meaning “compulsory obligation”).

As the first step in the rituals of death, as soon as a Shiite dies, his/her immediate family members and relatives halt their routine habits of everyday life, and this may last anywhere between 7 and 40 days—depending on the level of their belief in Shia Islam. They begin by showing new forms of conduct—such as new ways of dressing, wearing makeup, etc.—which they have never used before. It is argued that this new routine is decreed by religion, but evidence can be provided to support the belief held by some people that the routine is, at least to some extent, controlled by culture—though only the religious side of the rituals is described in the present chapter. Although Shia Islam allows the new routine to last between 7 and 40 days, some people who are very sentimental, or who follow certain other interests, may sometimes extend this period up to 1 year or even longer. Nevertheless, this extension is not recommended by the religion.

As soon as a Shiite passes away, all of his/her family members and relatives are expected to change their clothes and put on black clothes which they will wear for 7–40 days. In addition, men also avoid shaving their beard for 40 days, nor do they cut or style their hair. Women, on the other hand, avoid any kind of decorative behavior for 40 days. During this period, they avoid wearing makeup, halt doing their hair, avoid wearing jewelry, and so forth. This behavior is a semiotic show of sorrow and grief. Along the same lines, people who were close to the deceased, such as his/her friends and colleagues, may also decide to wear black, although this is not decreed by Shia Islam; it is a personal choice, and if they do so, it is because they want to provide “solace” to the family and relatives of the dead person. This is an important point from a pragmatic perspective, since it definitely lends ample support to Capone’s treatment of death rites as the “pragmeme of accommodation” (see Capone 2010a). The rites help the family and the relatives of the deceased to accommodate to the new state of life in which the deceased is no longer alive.

These are symbolic and semiotic actions. A man who does not shave his beard is displaying discomfort and sorrow, and so does a woman who does not wear makeup. Very often, these acts are considered as instances of “dissimulation” in that they are performed by people who would never do them and who do not believe in them in normal situations; it is important to emphasize here that, as Shia clerics believe and preach, true and honest belief in Shia Islam requires that this lifestyle (i.e., wearing darkish clothes, having beards, avoiding cosmetics, etc.) be the routine no matter whether a death has happened or not. Over centuries, Shia clerics have argued that wearing jewelry, cosmetics, and expensive clothes, or styled hair is considered as a “sign of attachment to the mundane world” and a “symptom of indulging in sensual pleasure,” and that Shia Islam strongly rejects any attachment or indulgence of this kind; they have ardently tried to recommend that Shiites should live a scant life which is devoted to the worship of God and to preparation for eternal life in the afterworld. Since 1979, when the Islamic revolution succeeded in Iran and overtook political power, this scant lifestyle has been preached ever more ardently.

Nevertheless, a number of Iranians have regularly shunned this ideologically inspired lifestyle; such Iranian Shiites have adopted a secular lifestyle in which shaving, hair-doing, wearing makeup, and so forth are part and parcel of civil life in the brave new world. As such, when men temporarily avoid shaving their beard or women temporarily avoid wearing jewelry and makeup in the face of a death, they are acting in ways to which they are not accustomed on an everyday basis. They are “pretending” to abide by the ideologically indoctrinated Shiite lifestyle, hence practice a dissimulation act.

It should also be emphasized that the death of a Shiite not only affects the lives of his/her family members and relatives, but also disturbs the lives of his/her neighbors (i.e., people living in the “forty” successive houses—adjacent or contiguous—that are located in virtually any radius from the house of the dead Shiite); if any of these neighbors has plans for a celebration of any kind (e.g., marriage ceremony), they halt it for 40 days. This has benefits for both the family and the relatives of the deceased and the neighbors themselves. On the one hand, it is done to accommodate the family and the relatives of the deceased to the new state of affairs; hence, the pragmeme of accommodation applies (Capone 2010a). On the other hand, the neighbors themselves gain some spiritual benefit in that they can take this opportunity to avert their minds from their earthly mundane lives and find some time to pay greater attention to God, death, the afterworld, and other valuable spiritual experiences.

As part of the rituals of death in Shia Islam, when a Shiite individual dies, his/her body should be buried as soon as possible. It is recommended that, as soon as a Shiite dies, one of his/her male relatives go onto the roof top (of the house) and proclaim *azan*<sup>9</sup> to announce the death. Upon hearing *azan*, the neighbors gather in the house, where the dead body lies, to pick it up and carry it towards the grave.<sup>10</sup> People who knew the deceased (including his/her family members, friends, relatives, neighbors, and other people) arrive at his/her house. A coffin is brought to the house, and the body is placed inside it. Then, four men pick up the coffin by its four corners, place it on their shoulders, and carry it to the cemetery where it is supposed to be buried; carrying the body to the cemetery is performed in the form of a slow-paced procession. The coffin is carried in the front of the procession and the other people who are present in the procession are expected to follow the coffin. During the procession, someone (usually a cleric or some other religiously respected person) keys certain religious phrases (usually verses of the Quran) to the people present in the procession with a loud voice, and they repeat those phrases loudly. It is believed that the deceased’s soul is alive and present in the procession, and that during that time it is experiencing great hardship. Therefore, it is recommended that

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<sup>9</sup> *Azan* is the religious call to prayer proclaimed three times a day by official Shiite muezzins in any mosque (in Sunni Islam it is proclaimed five times a day). It is also recommended that *azan* be proclaimed as soon as a death or a birth happens (but not by official muezzins, nor in a mosque); as such, the meaning of *azan* has been ‘extended’ beyond what it was originally meant to signify.

<sup>10</sup> City life is changing many of these patterns; doctors of forensic medicine see the body to make sure the death was natural and an ambulance carries the body to the cemetery; the rest of the rituals are still more or less the same.



the procession should keep a very slow pace. This, too, can be seen as part of the “pragmeme of accommodation”, in order to accommodate the deceased to the new state of affairs which is awaiting him/her in the grave. It is based on this assumption that the coffin, along its way to the graveyard, is carried by people who know quite well that they should walk at a very slow pace, and who also know that they should frequently put the coffin down and pick it up again; the intention behind this ritual has a social semiotic nature, which suggests that these steps must be taken slowly to reduce the deceased individual’s fear of the grave; it seems as if the deceased person is not dead. This is what the Shiite ideology earnestly preaches—the dead are not completely dead; their souls are alive and “feel” what happens to their bodies, so they need to be comforted.

When the coffin arrives at the cemetery, it is taken to a special washing room where the body is taken out of the coffin and is placed on an altar which is usually  $200 \times 100 \times 100$  cm in length, width, and height, respectively. At this point, everyone should leave the washing room, and only the washer (usually aided by one or two other people) stays in there to wash the body. Islam insists that they should be of the same gender as the deceased, and a man cannot wash a dead woman. The only exception is a son-in-law who is allowed to wash the dead body of his wife’s mother, but not all the sons-in-law of a woman are allowed to do this. If a woman has several daughters who are married, only the husband of her eldest daughter is allowed to wash her after she dies. This is not only allowed but also highly recommended by Shia Islam—but no reason has been provided in the Hadith as to why this is recommended. When it comes to washing the dead body of a child below the age of 6 (called age of “*tamiz*” or the age of discretion), gender becomes irrelevant and people from any gender can perform the washing.

The washing ritual itself (known as “*ghusl mayyit*,” meaning “ritual washing of the dead body”) is an intricate and rule-governed process, and cannot be performed in an ad hoc way. The first step in the washing process is to thoroughly clean the body from any observable “*nijasad*” (meaning “foul matters” or “filthy things”—such as urine, stool, blood, semen, etc.). A bar of soap and some lukewarm water should be used to fulfill this step. In the next step, the washer should recite a fixed religious phrase which overtly expresses his/her “intention” of washing the dead body, and that intention cannot be anything other than getting closer to God. This is called “*niyyat*” (meaning “overt expression of intentions”); if *niyyat* is not performed, the washing process will lose its religious effect, and the deceased will not be salvaged. For making the *niyyat*, the washer is obliged to say in clear and loud voice, “I am washing this dead body with sidr water *Wajib Qurbatan IlaLlah*.” “*Sidr water*” is a pail of water ( $1.5 \text{ m}^3$  in volume) to which two handfuls of dry lotus leaf powder have been added; it is also allowed to grind fresh lotus leaves in a blender and then pass the extract through a parchment paper to get a fine syrup, two cups of which can be added to water. In the third step, another *niyyat* should be made (i.e., “I am washing this dead body with camphor water *Wajib Qurbatan IlaLlah*”) and the body should be washed for a third time, this time with camphor water (i.e.,  $1.5 \text{ m}^3$  water to which a half handful of camphor has been added). Care must be taken in steps two and three to make sure that the water does not change into

“muzaf” water (i.e., it should not change in color, taste, or smell). In the last step, again another niyyat is made (i.e., “I am washing this dead body with clean water Wajib Qurbatan IlaLlah”), and the body is washed with clean (tap) water. It should be noted that in each of these steps, the head and the neck should be washed first, followed by the right side of the body, and finally the left side. Any deviation from this procedure will nullify the washing, and the deceased will not be salvaged. It is recommended that the washer should keep reciting Chap. 112 of the Quran during the washing process.

After the washing is performed, it is time for “tahnit” or “hunut,” which means applying camphor powder on seven parts of the dead body. Fresh fragrant camphor powder should be used, and it should be applied on the seven parts of the body that rest on the ground during prostration in daily prayers (or during “sajdah”). These parts are called “masajid,” and include the following: the forehead, the knees, the “big toe” or “great toe” (i.e., the hallux) of both feet, and the palms and thumbs of both hands—and this order should be followed in the tahnit process. Before performing the tahnit, the washer should make a niyyat by saying, “I am doing tahnit/hunut on the dead body Wajib Qurbatan IlaLlah.”

After this, the shrouding of the body can be performed. The shrouding process begins by prearranging the “kafan” (or pieces of cloth in which the body is wrapped) systematically. The body can then be laid on the kafan and then wrapped in it in a systematic way. Three pieces of cloth are obligatorily used for dead males, and five obligatory or wajib pieces should be used for females—there are several other optional (or “mustahab”) pieces as well. The wajib pieces include:

- a) “Lungi” (meaning “loin” cloth), which is an apron-like piece of cloth that covers all around the body from the navel to the ankles
- b) “Qamis” (meaning long shirt), which covers all around the body from the shoulders to the ankles
- c) “Chadar” (meaning long veil), which can be lapped around the entire body and is long and wide enough so that front parts overlap and the top and the bottom parts can be tied with a string.

In addition to these, for dead female bodies two more pieces are needed: (d) a “scarf” to wrap the head and the neck and (e) a “brassier” to cover the whole area of the bust or breast. It should be noted that, prior to shrouding, these pieces of cloth should be arranged over a mat on the floor in the proper order so that when the body is placed on top of them, it would be possible to easily wrap the body in them. The cloth used for shrouding should be white and made of linen or cotton. The mat should be placed on the floor in such a way as to make sure that the soles of the feet of the dead body will face the direction of the city of Mecca (or Qibla) when the body is placed on them for shrouding. Before wrapping the body in the chadar, two fresh twigs cut from a willow tree, inscribed with “shahadah,” should be wrapped in cotton wool, and placed in the arm pits of both arms; they will function as a pair of walking sticks on the day of resurrection. During the shrouding process, verses of the Quran should be continuously recited.

The enshrouded body is then placed in a coffin and is moved in a procession towards the grave where it should be buried. The coffin is put down on the ground in a place near the grave and before the people present there, who will then start praying in congregation. The coffin should be placed on the ground in such a way as to make sure that the head of the deceased is on the right side of the congregation and that its face is towards Qibla. The mullah (or the Imam who cues the prayer to the people present in the congregation) stands on the side of the coffin so that the coffin is in front of him and his direction of gaze crosses the center of the coffin. Those present in the congregation stand behind him—in a row or rows which stretch out to both the left and the right sides. The mullah recites the “salaat” (or death prayer) loudly, and the “mumineen” (or the people present in the congregation) repeat the recitation cued to them by the mullah. Unlike other prayers, this one involves no bending, nor any prostration, and it is offered in an upright position. It has five “takbirs” (or saying the phrase “Allahu Akbar,” meaning God is greater) and four recitations (or paratones/episodes)<sup>11</sup> said between the takbirs. The episodes are not the same, and the utterances that comprise each episode have their own specific discursive structures.

The death salaat is a collective prayer recited in a congregation, and the language used in it entreats God for the forgiveness of the dead in specific, and of mankind in general. As such, collective social intentionality (describe by Capone 2010a) has a crucial role to play in this salaat; the function of this prayer is to bring about an institutional fact of the kind described by Searle (1995). People who congregate to say the death salaat have tacitly and subconsciously agreed that saying this prayer means forgiveness and salvation for the deceased and also for the human race. This convention can be illustrated in the form of a logical formula: “*X* counts as *Y* in *C*.” Seen in this light, the death salaat counts as forgiveness of the dead and of mankind in rituals of death. As such, the major function of the salaat is to petition God not only for the forgiveness of the dead person, but also for the salvation of the whole human race.

The death salaat is so strongly institutionalized that it can be taken as an illustrative example of “biologically conventionalized speech acts” (or BCSAs) described by Millikan (1984) and Kissine (2013). BCSAs can be described in the form of the following rule: An entity *X* has the function *F* if, and only if, the capacity to perform *F* is what explains *X*’s evolutionary history. More precisely, *X* has the function *F*, if, and only if, *X* was reproduced from *Y*, *Y* has the properties resulting in *F*, and *Y* was selected because of these properties. In fact, Millikan argues that speech acts are nothing but conventional, and that different types of speech acts are determined by (a) speakers’ purposes and intentions, (b) biological functions, or (c) extralinguistic conventions.

Seen in this light, it can be argued that the repeated diachronic recitation of death salaat over the past 1400 years or so has gradually transformed this “socially” conventionalized practice into an “archetype,” and that now it is a collectively inherited pattern of thought which is part and parcel of the very existence of each Muslim. Under the huge influence of this archetype, the Muslim population of the world

<sup>11</sup> See Brown and Yule (1983) for a definition of “paratone.”

rarely, if at all, questions whether the funeral prayer can attract God's mercy for the deceased and the human race. It is collectively accepted that the death salaah has this function, and this belief is in fact intertwined with Islamic faith to such an extent that no one doubts its truth. The prayer is also believed to aim at providing comfort for the deceased in his/her new home (i.e., the grave), and as such is an example of what Capone (Capone 2010a, p. 6) calls the "pragmeme of accommodation." It ensures that the deceased accommodates "to the new state of affairs."

After the salaah is said, the body is ready for "dafan" (meaning "burial"). According to the teachings of Islam, a dead Muslim should not be buried in non-Muslim graveyards—unless a portion of that graveyard has been specifically reserved for Muslims. Conversely, non-Muslims cannot and should not be buried in Muslim graveyards either. If there is no Muslim graveyard in the country where a Muslim has died, the body should be transported to a Muslim country (preferably to sacred cities such as Karbala, Najaf, Mashhad, Qom, and the like) and buried there, and if this is not possible, the body can be buried in graveyards that belong to "Ahlul Kitab" (meaning "religions whose prophets had divine books"—i.e., Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians).

The coffin containing the body is brought into the graveyard and is put down at a short distance from the "lahad" (meaning "dug-up grave"). The body is taken out of the coffin, and is placed on the ground for a few seconds. It is picked up again and is taken closer to the grave; it is put down on the ground for a second time. After a few seconds, it is picked up again and is moved closer to the grave. This is done three times. When it is picked up for the fourth time, it is finally lowered into the grave with head first, and is put to rest on the right side. An obligatory act is to make sure that the dead person's face is towards Mecca (or Qibla). The person who does the burial should be careful to maintain such a position all the time. If the dead person is a female, only the "mahram" (meaning people who had the religious right to see her hair and naked body) should lower the body into the grave, and in the mean time a piece of cloth should be spread over the grave on top of the body to make sure that the bystanders would not see the process. In the absence of mahram, close relatives can lower the dead body of a female into the grave.

Once the body is laid in the grave, the ties at both ends of the kafan are unfastened and the face of the deceased person is shown to his/her family and relatives for the last time. Then, some soil is placed under the cheek of mayyit to form a pillow on which the head can rest. At this time, the cleric starts to cue the "talqin" (meaning "dictate") to the mayyit. It is believed that, when a person dies, she/he will be asked certain questions by two angels (named "Nakir" and "Monkar"), and that the answers the dead person gives will determine whether she/he can be salvaged. It is also believed that the pressure of death is so shocking that the dead person may forget everything as soon as the angel Israel comes to take his/her soul and to make him/her die. Thus, the function of "talqin" is to provide the answers to those questions and to help the dead person to be salvaged. Talqin is a prescribed text and begins with the fixed Arabic summons "Isma ifham ya" (meaning "You will listen and understand") followed by the dead person's first name followed by his/her father's first name (e.g., *Isma ifham ya Muhammad ibn Ali*); this summons is

then followed by the long Arabic text of talqin which is cued to the dead person. This is repeated three times. During talqin, the cleric who cues it should place his left hand tightly on the left shoulder of the dead body, should hold with his right hand the right shoulder of the dead body, and should take his mouth near its ear to recite the talqin text, and should keep shaking the dead body's shoulders throughout the process—as if he is waking up someone who is fast asleep. Talqin is supposed to have a hypnotic function during which certain information can be copied onto the dead body's long-term memory.

After talqin, the face is wrapped in the chadar again, and the ends of kafan are tightened. Then, three handfuls of soil are poured into the lahad and the Quranic verse “We created you from it, and return you into it, and from it. We will raise you a second time” (Quran 20:55) is recited simultaneously (cf., “Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return” (Genesis 3:19)). Then the lahad is filled up with soil and in the mean time more prayers are said, whereby the people standing around the grave petition God for the salvation and forgiveness of the dead person; the prayers also remind the dead person of his/her profession of faith. Filling up the grave continues until it is completely filled and leveled with the ground. After this, talqin is recited once more over the grave, followed by recitation of Chap. 97 of the Quran seven times, which in turn is followed by a short “dua” of “maghferat” (meaning “prayer for forgiveness”). That night, people gather in a mosque where they say the “salaat-ul-wahshat” (meaning “prayer of horror”) in congregation. This prayer is said in the short interval that falls between the daily prayers of “magrib” (meaning “dusk prayer”) and “isha” (meaning “evening prayer”). It is believed that *salaat-ul-wahshat* can help the dead person to overcome the horror of death and the pressure of the grave, and makes it possible for its soul to rest in peace.

The burial is usually followed by a three-day mourning period, during which mourning sessions are held in a mosque both in the morning and in the evening. This may be repeated on the 7th, 30th, and 40th days, and anniversaries may also be held. Throughout the mourning sessions, the male members of both the family and the close relatives of the dead person wear black and stand in the portal of the mosque where the mourning sessions are held—usually in two rows facing each other; when other people attending mourning sessions arrive at the mosque, they greet them. The participating people enter the mosque where they sit in the sessions. Quranic verses are recited<sup>12</sup> in each session, and mullahs take the opportunity to talk about religious topics that relate to death and the quality of life in the afterworld. They may also tell the people attending the sessions only about good qualities of the deceased; it is preached in Shia Islam that, once people are dead, no one should talk ill of them, as it can motivate the angels in charge of punishing the deceased (for his/her bad deeds in the world) to start punishing their bodies in the grave and their souls in the purgatory world. Moreover, by reciting the good qualities of the

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<sup>12</sup> It is not customary to give gifts to the relatives of the deceased; the only thing that participants may bring to mourning sessions is a flower bunch with a black ribbon and a card with some “condolence” message on it.

deceased, mullahs try to remind the hearers that they should do good deeds as long as they are alive. This has a didactic function, and enhances ethics in the society.

The very act of showing up in the sessions would suffice, and the people who attend the sessions are not expected to be present throughout the sessions. They may leave the sessions after some minutes of attending them if they choose to do so, and usually do so after drinking a cup of tea and eating a few dates or some “halwa” (a sweet paste made on death occasions). On their way out of the mosque, people are socially expected to start a very short conversation with the relatives of the deceased standing the portal of the mosque. These small talks have a phatic function, and the range of utterances that can be exchanged in these small talks is very limited. Only phrases are uttered that function as condolences and aim at strengthening social ties. If the visitor has not been on talking terms with the dead person, she/he may use phrases in the small talk that have a soothing function and can lead to appeasement. This is in line with Capone’s (2010a, b) findings in the kind of speech that is used in Catholic rites in Italy. Expressions of grief are allowed and the relatives of the deceased can weep for the dead person, but bewailing is not permitted by the religion—although the loftiness of the sorrow quite often makes it impossible for them to avoid wailing. It is allowed to praise the deceased as long as the topic of the praise focuses on his/her religious virtues and piety.<sup>13</sup> This has a “didactic” effect, and can help the society to strengthen the ethical and social foundations on which it stands. It is therefore not only allowed but also highly recommended. Nevertheless, three types of speech are strongly prohibited in mourning sessions: (1) speech that may make Muslims lose their faith, (2) speech that aims at hurting the grieved relatives of the deceased, and (3) speech that focuses on sensual, mundane, earthly, and material topics.

Speech that has the potential to cause Muslims to lose their faith in Islam and in God is strongly prohibited. It must be strongly emphasized that this kind of speech is always prohibited, and is even more so in mourning sessions as it may loosen people’s faith in God. Moreover, speech which may hurt the grieved relatives of the dead person should also be avoided since it can deepen their grief. Society in general and Shia Islam in particular emphasize that each and every Shiite is socially, ethically, and religiously obliged to provide solace to the families and relatives of the deceased. By the same token, speech that focuses on mundane, sensual, earthly,

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<sup>13</sup> It is normally believed that when there is no death people get so overwhelmed by their routine lives that they forget to think about death and to be prepared for it to happen any moment; they forget to do the right deeds that will please God, thereby helping them once they enter the purgatory world after death. When someone dies, people’s attention is suddenly diverted away from the mundane world and focused on the purgatory world and the deeds that will guarantee a safe travel to, and happy life in, that world. Death is in fact an attention getter which gets people’s attention towards the afterworld; people are forgetful and soon get back to the habits of the mundane world. Praise that focuses on the religious virtues and piety of the deceased is an attention holder that will keep people’s attention to death and the afterworld for a much longer time. It is recommended in Shiite belief that people visit cemeteries every Thursday afternoon, and this too is supposed to have the same attention-holding function. Shia Islam recommends that Shiite people be always focused on death and the afterworld, and preaches that they should do deeds that will keep them ready for death all the time.

and material topics should also be avoided. As it was stated earlier, Shia Islam believes that this world is transient and is a training ground for human beings, in which they learn how to qualify for eternal life in the afterworld. It is a place where people should actively avoid indulging in spending and eating sprees and should instead live a very scant life which is believed to pave the way for their salvation in the afterworld. It is on this ground that talking about earthly mundane topics is always prohibited—especially in mourning sessions where speech of this nature can avert people’s attention from God and the afterworld.

## 6 General Discussion

As the description of death rites presented above clearly shows, language is used in death rituals in Shiite Iran to fulfill three aims: (a) to entreat God for the salvation of the dead, (b) to help the deceased with the salvation process, and (c) to provide solace to the grieved relatives of the deceased. The language addressed to God has an entreating and petitioning function which will persuade God to forgive the sins of the deceased; it is believed that this kind of speech can persuade God to bestow the blessing of living in Paradise on the deceased. All the people who say the funeral prayer in congregation are in fact the “right” agents who talk to the “right” addressee (i.e., God) and in the “right” venue. As such, the first kind of speech that is used in Shia funerary rites is in essence a conventional illocutionary act<sup>14</sup> in that it not only relies on extralinguistic conventions but also is self-verifying. It is semiotically structured and is defined by nonlinguistic conventions, institutions, or rules.<sup>15</sup> It appeases God and entreats him for forgiveness for the deceased. The speakers’ job in this kind of speech is to produce the intended “conventional” effect—i.e., God’s salvation of the dead person. To do this, speakers are expected to make sure to present their utterances in accordance with the predefined conditions—determined by extralinguistic conventions—that must necessarily be met if the intention is expected to succeed (Alston 2000). This kind of speech has a “world-to-word direction of fit” (Searle 1992). In other words, the prayer said in congregation has the ability to cause the extralinguistic world to change to fit the linguistic and propositional content of the prayer, and this is in fact the entreating and petitioning function of the prayer.

The language addressed to the deceased (in the form of “talqin”) has a “cheating” or “dictating” function as it provides the deceased with the information he is supposed to know by heart, but has forgotten due to the pressure of death. As stated earlier, the dead person, when faced with death, is shocked and becomes so petrified that he/she completely forgets his line of faith. For instance, the dead person forgets

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed discussion of conventional illocutionary acts, please see Strawson (1964); Austin (1975); Bach and Harnish (1979).

<sup>15</sup> For a fuller discussion of semiotics, see Burton-Roberts (2013) in Capone, Lo Piparo, and Carapezza (eds.).

the name of the prophet of Islam, the names of the Shia twelvers, the oneness of God, and so forth. However, these pieces of information are not supposed to be forgotten as they will be the keys to salvation in the afterworld, and the dead person needs to know them to be able to pass the interview that will be conducted by two angels (i.e., two examiners named Nakir and Monkar) who will ask for them on the first night of death. Nakir and Monkar judge each and every dead person on the basis of these pieces of information, and whoever is not able to provide them will not be saved and will be doomed to end up in hell. It is on this ground that “talqin” is dictated to the dead, and its function is to help the dead to pass the interview. Talqin has a “cheating” effect in that it helps the dead to relearn and remember important pieces of religious information which will guarantee their success in being salvaged in the purgatory world.<sup>16</sup> As stated above, a cleric performs the talqin, and the dead person is the addressee. Both of them are the “right” persons in the speech event of talqin, and the prefabricated text of talqin which is dictated to the dead person in correct Arabic is the “right” formulaic speech which transfers some information to the dead. As such, this kind of speech, too, is an instance of a conventional illocutionary act (Strawson 1964; Austin 1975; Bach and Harnish 1979).

Speech directed at the grieved relatives of the deceased is the last kind of speech produced in funerary rituals. This is the type of speech that fits well in the framework of “pragmemes” (Mey 2001; Capone 2010a); in fact, the kind of speech interacted between the relatives of the deceased and the people who attend mourning sessions qualifies as the “pragmeme of accommodation” in the sense defined by Capone (2010a, p. 6). This speech has no communicative function, and its job is to fulfill a social and phatic goal. Both the speakers and the hearers in such small talk know about this phatic function, and they use clichés and predefined formulaic expressions in their utterances. There is a transparent “pretense” in each utterance spoken by any speaker in such interactions, and the listeners track the pretense and “collude” with the speakers on the pretense by responding in kind. As such, such small talk can be viewed as SCA (see Clark 1996) in that it is “pretensive and makes an outward—usually exaggerated or deniable—show” (Salmani Nodoushan 2014, p. 12). Its phatic nature lies in the sociopsychological force which serves a social function—that of providing solace for the grieved party and “giving solace to the close relatives of the deceased and to ensure that they accommodate to the new state of affairs” (Capone 2010a, p. 6); hence, the pragmeme of accommodation. Here is an example from a funeral observed some time ago:

Mr. Taghavi, whose father died a few months ago, was standing in the portal of the mosque in which mourning sessions were held. Placing the palm of his right hand against his chest as a sign of respect, one of the visitors who was leaving the mosque, said:

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<sup>16</sup> In Shiite belief, a Muslim lives in three worlds: the earthly world, the purgatory world, and the afterworld. When people die, their bodies remain here, but their souls enter the purgatory world. At a specific point in time after all human beings die and the Sun explodes, the bodies are resurrected and souls return to bodies. The human beings stand in front of Allah and are judged. Then they are sent to either Paradise or Hell, based on their deeds in their earthly lives.



- Visitor: *Tasliat migam. Ishaallaah gham e?aakheretun baashe*  
*Condolences. May this be the last time you lose someone.*
- Mr Taghavi: *kheili mamnun. Ishaallaah khodaa?amvaat shomaa raa ham*  
*gharin e rahmat koneh*  
*Thank you very much. May Allah bestow his mercy on your deceased*  
*relatives too.*

In small talk of this nature, it is often quite easy to find clichés that show the formality of such situations; the “optative” mood of the verb is quite frequently used in these interactions, and speakers shift from *tu* to *vous* in their choice of forms of address.<sup>17</sup> This is done even in interactions in which the interlocutors are sufficiently close to be able to use the less formal *tu* form. Nevertheless, it is paradoxical to observe that the more formal *vous* address form which creates more distance between interlocutors can provide more solace than the less formal and more friendly *tu* form (this could be the topic of another study), but it must be remembered that mourning sessions are part and parcel of religion, and that religion requires formal rather than friendly modes of talk. In other words, the people attending mourning sessions know quite well that they have actually attended a religious ritual where they are in the presence of God; they are bound by a tacit social protocol which tells them that they need to appreciate the formality of the context and to behave accordingly. Given this, they realize that polite forms of language should be preferred, even when the speech being interacted has an interpersonal nature and aims at providing solace for the grieved relatives of the deceased. The religious overtone of the utterances that are allowed in such conversations permeates all aspects of this speech situation, and the “optative” mood of verbs is used to express wishes for the salvation of the dead person and the health and prosperity of his/her family and relatives. As stated earlier, the grieved party is also expected to realize this formality and to reply to this kind of speech by making similar wishes for the prosperity of the visitors and for the peace of the souls of all the people they have lost. This indicates that everyone knows that there is a clear pretense in each utterance, on which the hearers collude with the utterers by responding in kind. Since the grieved party is in a volatile psychological state, equivocal speech is dangerous and can result in chaos. Therefore, people know quite well that they should avoid equivocation, and that their speech should not be open to any misinterpretation. It is on this ground that the utterances which are interacted between the visitors and the grieved party are for the most part prefabricated clichés and frozen statements that cannot be misinterpreted.

Seen from a social perspective, such small talk is potentially useful for the promotion of human warmth (Malinowski 1923; Burgess 1975) in that it seeks to establish contact between individuals. It does not aim at transmitting any specific content. Rather, such remarks are SCAs that serve a phatic and/or politeness purpose. Small

<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that, like French, Persians use *tu/vous* or T/V forms of address which can differentiate between friendly and formal contexts (see also Brown and Gilman 1960; Wardhaugh 1990).

talk of this nature is a social lubricant—devoid of any propositional content—which can maintain already existing social ties or create new ones (Boxer 2002). In such talk, the speech itself (i.e., the container) prevails over the propositional content of what is said (Casalegno and McWilliam 2004), and this gives it its phatic quality.

Based on what went before, it is logical to assume that death rituals are social episodes (or events) attended by members of the society who know how to behave in certain predetermined convention-governed ways which will guarantee the fulfillment of the intentions of the functions of those social episodes. Seen in this light, Shia death rituals are in line with Capone's (2010a, p. 6) concept of "social collective intentionality." To understand the nature of such a "collective social intentionality," we cannot simply see the world from the perspective of a physicist who describes the world in terms of physical subatomic particles in fields of force (i.e., electrons, protons, quarks, electromagnetic force, and so on—also called objective "brute" or "fundamental" facts; Anscombe 1958); we also need to consider the fact that, in addition to "brute" facts, there are certain abstract and concrete social constructs called "institutional" facts (e.g., money, democracy, language, etc.) that make up the reality of the world in which we live (Searle 1995). While brute facts are self-sufficient in that they can exist on their own, institutional facts owe their very existence and truth to brute facts (Searle 1995). Institutional facts, in Searle's view, emerge from collective intentionality and are expressed in logical formulae that take the form "*X* counts as *Y* in *C*." As such, small talk (*X*) counts as providing solace (*Y*) in mourning events (*C*). In much the same way as people know the "conventional" truth of such institutional facts as "money," "democracy," and so forth, they also seem to know the conventional fact that their participation in death rituals can provide solace for the grieved relatives of the deceased. In addition, as Capone (2010a) noted, small talk initiated by people who were not on talking terms with the dead person (or his/her grieved relatives) creates another institutional fact—that of appeasement. In other words, presence in funeral rituals (*X*) counts as appeasement (*Y*) in funerary rites (*C*). As such, death rites have a transformative property which can end enmity and bring peace. By the same token, absence from rituals (*X*) counts as perpetuating enmity (*Y*) in funerary rites (*C*). Needless to say, death is

...an occasion for appeasement or for perpetuating enmities, because if, on the one hand, one is encouraged to forgive an old friend or relative, if this chance is not promptly taken, the enmity becomes "consolidated", one of those facts of life which it will be extremely hard to change. So, we usually go to mourn old friends, relatives, colleagues, people who live on the other side of the street because we want our actions to conform to social norms and, directly and indirectly, bring our solace to the relatives of the deceased. (Capone 2010a, p. 7)

In sum, funerals provide a unique occasion in which socially appropriate or inappropriate new "institutional" facts are born and already-existing institutional facts are reemphasized. In other words, death rituals are "pragmemes" or "pragmatic acts" in that they draw on situated speech of which the structure, meaning, and sociopsychological intentions are already determined by linguistic and societal rules and conventions.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that death rituals in Iran are a special type of speech event with a sociopsychological function, and that their communicative functions are not that important. I described the speech event and argued that three types of speech can be seen in death rituals in Iran: (1) speech addressed to God, (2) speech addressed to the dead person, and (3) speech in interaction between people who attend mourning sessions and the grieved relatives of the dead person. I presented samples of each type of speech to argue that language in death rituals (a) can entreat God for the salvation of the dead person and of the whole human race, (b) can help the deceased person to pass a test and secure a safe place for himself/herself in the purgatory world, and (c) can give solace to his/her grieved relatives. Finally, based on my discussion of the types of speech used in funerary rites, I concluded that the types of funerary speech addressed to God and to the dead person can function as a kind of “conventional” speech act, and that the small talk occurring between the grieved relatives of the dead person and the people who attend mourning sessions falls into the category of SCAs and pragmemes. In sum, the main conclusion of this chapter is that elements of death rituals are frames that can shape the structure of speech and can help its interpretation.

## Appendix A: Guide to Persian Transcription Symbols

Symbol	Example	Symbol	Example	Symbol	Example
Aa	<u>a</u> rm	p	<u>p</u> en	t	<u>t</u> ea
O	<u>o</u> r	s	<u>s</u> o	j	<u>j</u> oke
u	<u>u</u> oo	ch	<u>ch</u> ange	h	<u>h</u> ouse
a	<u>a</u> t	x	<u>x</u> ub	d	<u>d</u> oor
e	<u>e</u> n	z	<u>z</u> oo	r	<u>r</u> ed
i	<u>i</u> sheep	zh	<u>zh</u> ision	sh	<u>sh</u> oe
q	<u>q</u> om	n	<u>n</u> oon	f	<u>f</u> oot
k	<u>k</u> ill	y	<u>y</u> ard	g	<u>g</u> ood
l	<u>l</u> and	ʔ	<u>ʔ</u> alʔaan	m	<u>m</u> oon
v	<u>v</u> oice	b	<u>b</u> ad		

The/?/ symbol represents glottal stop, and is used at the beginning of Persian syllables followed by a vowel.

The/q/ (i.e., a radical stop) and/x/ (i.e., a radical fricative) represent Persian-specific consonants.

The Persian sporadic feature *tashdid* is represented by the repetition of the phoneme that receives it.

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# Twenty-Seven Views (Plus One) of Language Socialization

Jacob L. Mey

**Abstract** The “Twenty-Seven Views” alluded to in the title of the current chapter correspond to the individual chapters of a recent book edited by Alessandro Duranti, Elinor Ochs, and Bambi B. Schieffelin (eds.); *The handbook of language socialization*, Wiley-Blackwell, Malden, 2012, pp. xvi + 660. As to the year of publication, there is a slight divergence between the book’s cover page and colophon, where the year is given as “2012,” and the bottom lines of the individual chapters, where the year occurs as “2011”). The excess “Plus One” view is the present author’s: It will pop up with intermittent and unexpected intervals throughout the text, and in this way do more than merely present a conspectus of the work under consideration; rather, it aims to compare and evaluate the (sometimes very divergent) earlier and contemporary views on language socialization presented here and elsewhere in the literature, and thus endeavors to achieve some measure of convergence, if not homogeneity, of the various authors’ points of view.

**Keywords** Linguistic anthropology · Culture · Pragmatics · Language socialization · Culture and literacy · First- and second-language acquisition · Child rearing incl. “shaming” · Social orientation and identity creation · Stance taking and morality · Social hierarchies · Peer groups and exclusion · Aesthetics · Narrative · Improvisation and verbal play · Repetition · Language ideology · Immigrants and bilingualism · Heritage languages · Endangerment and revitalization

## 1 Introduction

*The Handbook of Language Socialization* comprises 27 chapters, many of which contain (in all over 60) illustrative figures. Following the introductory Chap. 1 by the editors on “The Theory of Language Socialization,” the remaining individual chapters are grouped into five major parts, entitled “Interactional Foundations,” “Socialization Strategies,” “Social Orientations,” “Aesthetics and Imagination,”

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and “Language and Culture Contact,” each comprising from three to seven chapters. The “Notes on Contributors” (pp. ix–xv) contain brief profiles of each of the volume’s 36 editors and authors. Bibliographical references are provided at the end of each chapter; a 22-page subject and name index (648–660) concludes the volume.

## 2 Part I

Part I, “Interactional Foundations,” “direct[s] our attention to the social worlds of prelinguistic infants and [their] caregivers” (23). The three chapters composing this part all underline that, contrary to many common beliefs (both among the general public and shared by a number of researchers), these “worlds” are by no means universal (as one might surmise, basing oneself on obviously similar biological conditions and circumstances); on the contrary, the editors argue, there is “significant cultural variation in the everyday activities of caregivers and infants” (23).

Chapter 1 by editors Elinor Ochs and Bambi B. Schieffelin, entitled “The Theory of Language Socialization” (1–21), provides a theoretical anthropological foundation for the study of language socialization, its focus, methods, and scope. It is pointed out that while pragmatics tends to focus on what Malinowski has called the “context of situation,” with a primary interest in issues such as verbal acting, intentionality, and the flow of information, “the study of language socialization examines how children and other novices apprehend and enact the ‘context of situation’ in relation to the ‘context of culture’” (1). The authors also (briefly but usefully) reference the volume’s individual chapters, grouping them under thematic headings, such as “Language socialization and agency,” “Becoming speakers of cultures,” “Transcending the nature-nurture divide,” “Semiotic resources for socialization,” “Language socializing practices,” and “Language socialization and speech communities.” In their “Conclusion,” the editors draw attention to the fact that the volume “has grown through the kind of collaborative language socializing practices we have observed in our field sites” (17); it is not often one sees theory and practice going hand in hand in a work like this. In the same spirit, the book distinguishes itself by its copious and accurate cross-referencing—another rare trait, not only with regard to the volume itself and its individual chapters but also extending beyond, to other relevant work by the coauthors and by other writers.

In Chap. 2 (29–55), Penelope Brown examines “The Cultural Organization of Attention.” The author remarks that prelinguistic infancy has not been an explicit focus of studies in language socialization (29), even though many studies have concentrated on the infant’s early socialization and its sequential development through stages. One important “milestone” is the emergence of the “referential triangle,” when the infant first recognizes the caregiver as an “intentional agent” and joins with him/her in attending to a common object or event (30). This establishing of “joint attention” is evidenced, among other things, by the activity of “pointing”; the question is whether this is a universal in infant development or whether it is



culturally and socially conditioned as a precondition for language socialization. The chapter focuses on developmental “stories” in two radically different non-European societies: the Maya Tzeltal and the Rossel Islanders off New Guinea, in which infants are exposed to rather different regimes of socializing: mostly nonverbal against verbal, exposure to few versus multiparty interaction, an adult-based versus child-based model of interaction, and so on. Despite these differences, and the concomitant varying development of “pointing” as a way of establishing joint attention, the two communities “are similar in this fundamental respect: joint attention is clearly achieved” (47). This leads the author to conclude that “the cultural organization of attention operates on a preprogrammed biological basis” (48), akin to the “interactional engine,” which is said to be the biologically pre-programmed foundation for “collective interactional abilities” (29). While the author recognizes that there are indeed culturally diverse ways of socializing pre-infants, the jury seems to still be out on the question whether those cultural differences do make a difference; the developmental “milestones” seem to be “not notably affected by these kinds of differential interactional treatment in infancy” (48; quoting Brazelton 1977). And consequently, “indexical pointing does not play a special role in the origination of attention” (49). A further question, which clearly falls outside the remit of the chapter, is whether (and how) prelinguistic differences in infant treatment play out later in an individual’s life, as it is influenced by different socialization patterns post infancy. The author has some evidence for this from longitudinal studies, but they are not brought into the discussion in the present chapter.

Chapter 3 (56–80), by Akira Takada, entitled “Preverbal Infant-Caregiver Interaction,” deals with the very early socialization processes that take place from birth until the age when “language makes reciprocal communication more effective,” in Jerome Bruner’s words (1983, quoted 58), roughly at 12–14 months of age. The preverbal infant and caregiver form one “system” and their relationship should be analyzed “as a unit” (56). The various phases that this unit goes through, range from “shared rhythms and repetition,” through “shared attention,” and “shared memory,” to “shared language” (57–58). As the author remarks, language socialization starts “before speech” through facial expression, gestures, backchannel, and so on—all of which are not only embedded in, but also “generative of context” (59). As to the context itself, the classical notion of the mother–infant dyad needs to be complemented by an approach that “foregrounds how children are socialized in a particular speech community,” and here the body is part of the “micro-habitat,” or “field of cultural practice” (Bruner (1983)).

The data analyzed in this chapter come from the author’s fieldwork among the San, a semi-nomadic tribe from the central Botswana Kalahari area. The focus is on two aspects of early socialization in this environment: how is “reciprocal accommodation” established through cultural practices, based on the infants’ and caregivers’ interaction; and: how does so-called communicative musicality contribute to socialization? As to the first, the author provides a careful ethnographic account of two minutes’ worth of mother–infant interaction (62–68), also taking into account the external input (from bystanders, overhearers, and even animals) occurring at the same time. The musical activities likewise occur in the same social and cultural

field, in which speech socialization happens apace with bodily stimulation through rhythmic song and proto-dance (“stepping” or *tsando*; 71–73). It appears that culture and cultural practices are not just a precondition for children’s early socialization; “culture is not only a system constructed in the mind, . . . but an ever-shifting accumulation of temporally coordinated actions by which children and other members of a particular community collaboratively realize social meanings” (76).

Lourdes de León, in Chap. 4, “Language Socialization and Multiparty Participation Frameworks” (81–111), studies a Mayan community, Zinacantan, with regard to their practices in language learning. There is a world of difference between the Euro-American pattern of “face-to-face” dyadic interaction and the Zinacantec Mayan “participation framework,” where triadic and multiparty patterns of interactions are much more frequent, accompanied by variety of “F-formations” (Adam Kendon’s short for corporeal arrangements called “facing formations,” 87; Kendon 1990) that may vary from face-to-face or lateral, to “nested,” or even “L-shaped” alignments (all of these abundantly illustrated by grabs from the author’s videotaped fieldwork). Zinacantec socialization places great emphasis on the child’s role as an “emergent participant” in triadic (and even polyadic) exchanges, where the child is not just considered a “proto-speaker” (as in the Euro-American tradition), but has a variety of interactional roles: that of a *quoted* “‘focal’ proto-speaker, an addressee in interactional routines, or an overhearer (in the sense of Erving Goffman, 1974) in triadic interactions” (91). As the author remarks, “learning through overhearing plays a particularly important role in communities where children are not frequently addressed by adults” (84).

Author de León concludes that “multimodal communication offers diverse ways in which novices coordinate with others in social interaction,” both as speaking and nonspeaking participants (102); in the Zinacantan case, the child is “actively participating from the periphery” (103), on the way to full participation in the interaction; as the volume’s editors remark in their “Introduction” to this part, the ways in which infants “learn how to learn” (Gregory Bateson’s expression; 1972) “depend on local theories of personhood, agency, teaching, and learning, as well as on the social meanings and structures for participation in each community” (27). Consequently, it becomes more and more important that variation and similarities are studied, based on the “interactionally grounded ethnographic and linguistic accounts” (Bateson 1972) of the kind that the present chapter richly provides.

### 3 Part II

Part II is entitled “Socialization Strategies.” Socialization is about becoming a socially “competent person” (113); the “strategies” mentioned are about providing young members of a society with “appropriate contexts for learning . . . ways of knowing and being in the world” (114) and the articles forming this part of the book all discuss “the role of language and interaction in the process” (113). Such an “existential” perspective is in contrast with earlier, “essentialist” ways of focusing

on particular skills (such as literacy) without taking into account the multifarious cultural aspects that all such strategies exhibit; when it comes to child rearing and language socialization, “local theories” and the derived practices differ wildly, even within an otherwise homogeneous community.<sup>1</sup> As the editors remark, language socialization strategies “shed light on local conceptions of language” (Bateson 1972), and may eventually be decisive for how a language is transmitted to the next generations, and perhaps even saved from extinction (Bateson 1972); some relevant test cases are discussed in the part’s individual chapters.

Olga Solomon, in Chap. 5, “Rethinking Baby Talk” (113–149), urges us to “re-think” baby talk (BT), leaving behind the simplistic assumptions made by early theoreticians such as Noam Chomsky (postulating the existence of an LAD, a “language acquisition device”, 124), established in the context of a grammatical theory rather than actual observation of interaction. The idea that BT is a linguistic universal, innate and identical across all cases of first-language acquisition, was confronted with a barrage of studies focusing on actually occurring BT in a variety of cultures and languages (125); instead of formulating lofty hypotheses, “the language socialization perspective made groundbreaking contributions to understanding the development of human sociality, demonstrating that human beings develop the ability to speak a language as a way of becoming competent members of society” (127). Rather than subscribing to an essentializing cluster of behaviorist hypotheses (ironically, Chomsky, in attacking behaviorism, based his LAD on the same kind of “stimulus-reaction” thinking that he ascribed to his main adversary, B.F. Skinner), author Solomon underscores the social character of language interaction in the case of “talking to/with/about babies”; “such practices are as varied and multifaceted as the societies in which they are embedded” (125), and “not all of the features attributed to BT are universal or necessary for language acquisition” (129), also beyond the mother–child dyad.

In the sequel, the author addresses the potentially harmful consequences of “BT,” especially in the case of children suffering from autism and other neurodevelopmental conditions. Social engagement is thought to be key in establishing communicative links, and speech (‘talk’, as in BT) need not be the only channel exploited (135 ff.); instead, an “algorithm” of “communicative conditions” is proposed, intended to “optimize social participation” (140); the focus of language socialization should be on “doing together,” to borrow Schegloff’s (2006) expression (141).

Chapter 6 (150–168), by Amy Paugh, treats of “Local Theories of Child Rearing.” Against the backdrop of her own research on childhood socialization practices in Dominica (West Indies), the author provides an overview of the various practices encountered in child rearing, in particular in connection with the emergence and development of language: child-oriented (most Western societies) versus situation-

<sup>1</sup> From my own childhood, I recall how the prevalent tendency in certain progressive circles to deconstruct parental authority made my parents institute the “T-form” of address in interaction with their children; however, as the surrounding context of other families diverged sharply in this respect, my two-year younger brother at one point begged to be taught to use the “V-form,” the way he had heard other children address their parents.

oriented (many non-Western societies such as New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, or Samoa). Studying the “predictable routines” (151), involved in child socialization, one often notices how the children actively “socialize” their partners (rather than the other way around) and “help constitute caregiving roles such as parent, grandparent, and sibling” (Schegloff 2006).

Interestingly, socializing practices often play important roles in matters such as language shift and language maintenance. Certain societies, such as the Gapun in New Guinea, set great importance by the choice of language to be used by their children: the village vernacular, Taiap, versus TokPisin, the official language of the country. The use of the latter indexes being “educated” and displays “cooperation, sociability, and knowledge of appropriate behavior and speech” (156), whereas the use of the vernacular is associated with “selfishness and individualism” (Schegloff 2006). In this way, “local theories of child rearing and the self contribute to language socialization practices that speed up loss of Taiap” (Schegloff 2006). Similar tendencies are observed by the author in Dominica, where speaking the local Creole, called Patwa (from French *patois*), is normally discouraged in children, as indexing a too brash and “adult” behavior, but is encouraged in situations where such behavior is welcomed, as when self-assertion needs to be inculcated and practiced (159 ff.), without however the children “crossing the boundaries of acceptable childhood behavior” (164). Also in this case, the impact of such language socialization practices on the status of the vernacular is significant.

The author concludes that, while “[a]ll normally developing children have the capacity to learn language, local theories of child rearing manifest in language socialization practices...affect when, how, and what language(s) children learn to speak” (165), and indirectly, how the languages spoken in the community develop over time.

“Language Socialization and Shaming” is the title of the next Chap. 7 (169–189), by Adrienne Lo and Heidi Fung. Shaming, as a form of moral instruction, plays a big role in socializing young children, both verbally and nonverbally. The verbal routines “link affect, morality, and linguistic practices” (169); shame, as “a response to the external judgment of others” is “opposed to guilt, where the individual’s internalized sense of wrongdoing is more paramount” (170). While shame is evaluated negatively, “guilt is lauded as a morally and culturally superior emotion” (Schegloff 2006). The authors observe that this latter “privileging of guilt over shame” is connected to the Christian worldview, and should not be considered “a psychological universal” (172).<sup>2</sup>

In the Taiwanese and Korean societies that the authors have studied, “shaming of young children is understood as a form of love, discipline and moral teaching that

<sup>2</sup> Falsely induced shaming-based guilt may backfire, though, when used as an educational measure. I recall how my kindergarten teacher, whenever she wanted to shame me, would refer to my “littleness” (I was a small child for my age), by bringing her right-hand thumb and forefinger closely together, so as to index my diminutive stature and thereby symbolize my “child-like” behavior. My reaction was to both resist the shaming and reject the implicit lesson, whatever it may have been; however, given my age and the strongly Evangelical Christian background of the school, I could not do this verbally.

aims to protect the child from future external sanctions” (173). Shaming practices in these societies comprise both verbal (dyadic and multiparty) shaming, as well as certain forms of shaming embodied in corporal practices (as “writing with one’s butts” in South Korea; 180). In these and other contexts, “bland encouragement is seen as a marker of emotional distance, while unmitigated, affectively intensified dyadic shaming is understood as a demonstration of warmth and affection” (181). Interestingly, while in the South Korean contexts, children being shamed are not supposed to talk back, but bow their heads and maintain a silent, demure behavior, Korean American children may respond to shaming, following a real or imagined transgression, by contesting the adult’s view of the incident and assert their own “moral autonomy” from a very young age (184–185). The authors conclude that, far from being a purely negative activity, shaming in Taiwan and South Korea is a “complex verbal practice,” which is seen as a necessary and integral part of moral education that “helps to guide the child to reflect upon her own deeds and to develop a sense of right and wrong” (186).

In Chap. 8 (190–208), Peggy J. Miller, Michele Koven, and Shumin Lee discuss “Language Socialization and Narrative.” The authors draw our attention to the heterogeneity of narrative, both locally and generically, and point out how the different narrative roles are unevenly distributed among participants — not only in the case of children vs. adults or females vs. males but also when it comes to what could be called “narrative discrimination” against participant categories such as the elderly, immigrants, or people from different social and ethno-cultural backgrounds.

Socialization through narrative includes, as one of its major components, the construction of an identity. While earlier traditions conceived of this process as individual-oriented, more recent thinking has focused on “the notion of self/identity as images of self and others in patterns of interactional engagement” (192). As can be expected, such patterns may diverge widely from culture to culture, and even within the same sociocultural context. The authors cite cases where children’s narratives are parentally (co-)constructed in radically different ways, such as when Taiwanese parents place a “didactic” bias on stories told about and by children, whereas middle-class US parents tend to tell stories in ways that “systematically construct the child’s self in favorable terms” (194).

Such “narrative inequality” may have serious consequences for the participants both at home, in the school system and beyond, in society at large. Appeal is made to Bourdieu’s (1991) notion of “misrecognition,” by which we come to view “ways of speaking commanded by dominant groups as more desirable” (194–195)—and consequently, tend to demean other ways of speaking (the classical debates of the seventies about “deficit versus difference” are mentioned here; Gramsci’s concept of “hegemony” could likewise have been invoked). But the buck does not stop at the school yard or the classroom: The authors quote a particularly poignant case of a Taiwanese grandmother who, being denied access to, and valuation of, her own language, Hoklo, was reduced to the status of a nonspeaker, a person without a voice (201–202).

Such untold, or “devalued,” narratives become particularly important in cases where immigrants are denied basic human rights because they do not express them-

selves in the “local ways of narration” (198); as a result, political asylum seekers may be sent back to their home countries where their fate is uncertain, to say the least. While a desirable “transnational mobility” of narratives in many ways may contradict our notion of the “true,” sociocultural worth of the stories placed within their own contexts, the need to speak a “narrative dialect” other than one’s own reminds one of the way linguistic abilities often form the touchstone by which potential immigrants are judged (or, as the case may be, “devalued”) in host countries such as the USA or many European states.

The chapter offers numerous valuable insights (many of which are well documented and helpfully referenced) that may help us understand the processes of narrative socialization “through which selves and inequality are understood and experienced” (202). Highly recommended reading for educational practitioners and theoreticians alike!

Chapter 9 (209–226), by Leslie C. Moore, deals with “Language Socialization and Repetition.” According to the proverb, “repetition is the mother of all instruction”—a sentiment reflected in a recent statement by Deborah Tannen that “repetition is at the heart of language” (2007, p. 56)—and extended in the context of the current volume to underscore that “repetition is at the heart of language socialization” (220). However, as Bakhtin (1994) has pointed out, repetition is no mere *re*-production: “each new production recontextualizes the language and changes the meaning” (210); hence, rather than being mere “imitation,” repetition may be a way of being creative (Tannen 2007). As to the practices of repetition, the author distinguishes four types: one is “revoicing” (also called “ventriloquizing,” in the Bakhtinian tradition; 211); here, the speaker “does not necessarily repeat another’s speech accurately,” but may use it for expressing a stance of his or her own, for appropriating the other’s words in order to maintain control (as in the classroom), or for “building collegiality” (212).<sup>3</sup> Another type is “prompting,” where speakers give “direct instructions in speech behavior by modeling utterances for children to repeat”; more than just inculcating proper speech behavior, prompting also stresses “which kinds of speech are important,” and appropriate to repeat in which situations (213). A third type is the highly routinized “guided repetition,” by which children are learning “different ways of being in the world” through guided repetition “in culturally different ways” (e.g., by emphasizing respect for authority, as in Qur’anic schooling in Cameroon, versus stressing the values of a democratically oriented Cameroonian citizenship 215). And finally, there is repetition in language play, which may assist children by providing “opportunities for practice of patterns of phonology, morphology, syntax, discourse and pragmatics” (216). In this way, “children can engage with the cultural and linguistic practices of their community in ways that are creative and sometime subversive” (Tannen 2007).

Another important area where repetition plays a role is that of second-language learning. My own experience as a learner has taught me that owning a set of fixed

<sup>3</sup> Following Hugh Kenner’s “Uncle Charles principle,” speakers may also appropriate words spoken by others to characterize the person or a situation (as in “Uncle Charles repaired to the out-house”, the famous Joyce quote that gave rise to the moniker; Kenner 1978, Chap. 2).

expressions is a great help not only in establishing a second-language identity but also for obtaining a practical foothold in learning the language, and a much needed platform for practicing it. The author mentions several negative aspects of repetition in this context, among others the lack of “opportunities for children to use the language for their own expressive purposes” (218); however, to be able to do so, one needs to have the elementary building blocks in place, and here, repetitive standardized phrases (that can be varied according to current need) are an important kind of “scaffolding.” In another context, that of religious socialization, the use of repetition facilitates the learning of the commandments by heart (as in catechism instruction); but in addition, it may serve to have the learners “commit to them,” not least by emphasizing the “embodied aspect” of the learning situation: the acquisition of a proper comportment, along with the textual knowledge (220). Overall, the author concludes, “[r]epetition is an important resource for accomplishing social action,” especially as the act of repetition is not only imitative: “the act of repeating can be transformative”; and novices, “having acquired canonical, traditional, and authoritative language forms, are able to diverge from them in creative and possibly innovative ways” (Tannen 2007). After all, as the author also remarks, communicative competence is always “intertextual in nature” (231).

In Chap. 10 (227–246), Laura Sterponi critically discusses the concept of “Literacy Socialization.” The commonly accepted connection between the acquisition of literacy and the development of human cognition that gave rise to theories about the “Great Divide” between literate and nonliterate societies (228 f.) is examined in light of recent thinking of literacy as “a set of socially organized practices,” in the words of Scribner and Cole 1981, p. 236). A “situated account” of literacy draws our attention to the fact that literacy practices are highly differentiated, both as to their execution and their purposes (230). In particular, the emphasis on “alphabetization” as the precondition for successful reading and writing seems ill-motivated, given the highly educated cultures that have emerged using other writing systems (e.g., China, Japan, or the Vai studied by Scribner and Cole 1981). All of this offers counterevidence to the assumption that without the alphabet, one cannot have critical reflection or intellectual development, or even a well-functioning society.<sup>4</sup>

The situated character of literacy has been brought out by Shirley Brice Heath’s well-known studies of a local community in the southern USA (Heath 1983). Here, children who came from households where literacy was practiced, had better results in the schools, where the norms for success were based on an ability to deal with texts; by contrast, the working class and black children had greater difficulties and did poorly on reading tests. Additionally, the social and socializing character of literacy training was brought out by studies focusing on the “total effect” of al-

<sup>4</sup> As an illiterate Westerner in Japan, I experienced the advantages of *kanji* writing over alphabetic lettering when, in the early days of my stay, I was able to identify, from way in the distance, the city bus I needed to catch in order to get to my place, simply by looking at the leftmost big character on the front of the bus (the Japanese numeral “5,” pronounced “go,” being the first syllable of the full place name, “Gotanda”), rather than struggling with the toponym’s other, intricate characters (or for that matter, with the Arabic numeral for the bus itself, as this happened to be a “9” and, being very small, was hard to make out).

phabetization in a particular context: For the Samoan children, studied by Duranti and Ochs, “literacy acquisition had far more encompassing effects than mastering a script. . . . Samoan children were socialized into worldviews and interactional patterns that prepared them to enter and contribute to a Western economy and labor market” (232–233).

As an alternative to the individualized, decontextualized way of handling texts that seems to be the official purpose of literacy instruction in our schools, the author introduces the “interactional” reading practices she observed among first and second graders in a Californian elementary school. The young readers not only “did” their texts collectively, they also raised questions about the text and engaged in discussions about the writers’ authority and the correctness of the information provided. This “active readership exercised by the children in clandestine interactional reading” (240) bears witness to the fact that even at this young age, the readers engage in dialogue with the text or, as the author calls it, in “interpretive double-voicing or double-voiced reading” (240). While this may be true, it should also be noted that the “critical reading” that was mentioned earlier as the “folk ideology of a learned profession” (235) is not too far removed from a similar, “ventriloquizing” form of readership (to borrow a concept dear to Bakhtin 1981, p. 298). In fact, I would go so far as to maintain that as a reader, one starts to ventriloquize as soon as one opens a book; one’s reaction to the text may not always be formulated in so many spoken or written words, but the “inner voice” (of acquiescence, agreement, protest, or critique) is always there. Thus, critical reading is perhaps the most universal form of “interaction with texts,” whether this is a spontaneous activity or one that has been taught and promoted in the environment of an educational institution. As I have expressed it elsewhere, the reader has a voice, and engages in a Bakhtinian dialogue with the author in the very “act of reading,” to borrow Wolfgang Iser’s felicitous wording (1978/1976); see Mey 2001, Chap. 8 “Does the reader have a voice?”). This, I suppose, is also the author’s view when she concludes that “a language socialization perspective on literacy” will help us to better understand “how literacy is concurrently implicated in empowering and limiting practices in sociocultural reproduction and transformation” (242–243).

Tanya Stivers, in her Chap. 11 “Language Socialization in Children’s Medical Encounters” (246–266), addresses an important, but often overlooked area of social interaction: the way children are socialized to become “active participants” in medical encounters by being “proactive,” rather than merely reactive interactants (248). If physicians, for a variety of reasons, are prone to address questions to parents and caretakers rather than to the child patients themselves, it may be because they wish to save time and secure a better treatment: Mothers are quicker to respond, and usually are more knowledgeable than are children (249–215). Yet, as the author remarks, “giving children the opportunity to answer questions is important from a language socialization perspective” (251); more generally, society stands to benefit from people taking a more active role in their medical affairs. Patients being socialized into verbal interaction with health providers constitute a valuable contribution to society’s health situation overall. The question to what degree socioeconomic conditions and racial prejudice affect children’s interaction with doctors is raised



from a variety of perspectives, but no definitive answers are found. In general, children from a minority background will be less “proactive” in the medical interview, whereas children from better-situated families (mostly white) tend to be privileged in terms of “levels of entitlement” (262).

The author concludes her study by stating that more and “new investigations into how practitioner-patient interactions” affect “racial and socioeconomic disparities through language socialization” (263) are needed; the studies presented in the chapter can “open the door” to this. To which I say: Amen.

A few minor cavils follow: In the beginning, the author had stated that her study “combines conversation analysis [CA] (with its focus on *structures* of social interaction) with quantitative analyses” (248; original emphasis). However, in spite of the CA-based transcription system and the occasional CA term thrown in for good measure (“orient to,” “select,” “attend to”), this statement struck me programmatic, rather than methodically motivated. Then, I had some difficulty connecting Fig. 11.1 (“Physician selecting the mother to answer”; 250) with either the surrounding text or the caption. The doctor is busy writing up his notes with his back to the patient and her/his caretakers/companions, two women in chadors, one of them holding a swaddled infant; neither appear to be participating in any interaction.

## 4 Part III

The volume’s Part III, entitled “Social Orientations,” examines the various verbal practices that accompany and complement the embodied behavior that allows us to “‘get into’ a particular view and set of actions organized around sociality” (269). The general focus all the way through this part of the book is on “social categories, identities, and social stereotypes”; while traditionally, many socializing practices are conceptualized in the context of first-language acquisition, it is important to realize that acquiring language and verbal routines also has “implications for multilingual and older second language learners” (269; as has also been noted, among others, by Mey 2001).

Matthew Burdelski, in Chap. 12 (275–296): “Language Socialization and Politeness Routines,” focuses on how Japanese children are socialized into appropriate politeness routines in order to (in the late Geoff Leech’s words) “avoid communicative discord or offence, and maintain communicative concord” (275; see Leech 2006, p. 173). In a society such as Japan, where great emphasis is placed on maintaining social harmony at all times, it is not surprising that enactment of societal politeness routines (both verbal and nonlinguistic, as in body postures) takes place from the very early stages of socialization, such as in kindergarten and other preschool centers of early education. As the author argues in his richly documented article (based on several years of fieldwork, mostly in the Kansai area of the country—a region otherwise not exactly known for its politeness, as the Tokyo people love to maintain), “[i]n Japan, politeness is central to Japanese caregivers’ expectations of children’s development in the home and preschool. Socialization into politeness begins well before children are able to speak”; however, full social-

ization into the intricate Japanese system of honorifics and “respect language” is of necessity acquired only later in life, and not seldom requires explicit training (278).

The kind of politeness that is instilled from early on in Japanese children rests not so much on the use of words (routine politeness formulas such as the ubiquitous *sumimasen* “excuse me”), as on a kind of (not necessarily verbal) “empathic” ritual by which the identity of the other person is brought into play, for instance, in the case of a real or imagined offense (e.g., a child bumping into a playmate; 281–282). This can be done through impersonating either the offending child or the offended interlocutor and by “speaking for another” (the caretaker impersonates correct language use and behavior for the child to imitate), or by prompting (the caretaker “puts word in the child’s mouth, and rewards for proper repetition or imitation” (280–283). This kind of socialization routines can sometimes lead to situations that strike a Westerner as a bit bizarre, as when children in Japan are taught to apologize to lifeless objects such as stones thrown carelessly away (287) or to a flower whose petals inadvertently have fallen off when touched (Burdelski 2013, pp. 70–71). Clearly, as far as Japanese socialization practices are concerned, “deeper values [are] associated with politeness,” in particular the “attending to others’ wants and needs: a central aspect of ‘empathy’, which is socialized in Japan from a young age” (290).

Likewise drawing on a Japanese context, Chap. 13 “Language Socialization and Stance-Taking Practices,” by Haruko Minegishi Cook (296–321), discusses “stance-taking” as enacting and reproducing social values and ideologies (296) Drawing on work by Ochs (1996, p. 410), the author distinguishes between “epistemic stance,” having to do with knowledge and belief, and “affective stance,” referring to moods and attitudes (297); this is not a watertight compartmentalization, the author notes, as the various stances and moods affect one another (Ochs 1996). Since different societies have different values and ideologies, it is important to position oneself appropriately when dealing with other cultures, for instance when studying to acquire the proper use of a foreign language; but also within the same culture, socialization into appropriate linguistic behavior involves the teaching and learning of appropriate “stancing.” In this respect, Japanese is particularly interesting because of its preference for “pragmatic specificity and sensitivity to the domain of knowledge/affect and authority” (301), and thus poses particular problems for learners from cultures that do not share this preference.

The author demonstrates certain aspects of Japanese language socialization by discussing various particles and modal expressions, in particular the form *deshoo*, an epistemic stance marker used to index two different but intersecting domains of knowledge: “subjectivity (authority of knowledge) and intersubjectivity (shared knowledge)” (303); using Akio Kamio’s (1994) terminology, one may say that *deshoo* indexes the speaker’s “territory of information.” When a Japanese host/cook utters *kore oishii deshoo?* “this [sushi] is delicious?” (303), she simultaneously indicates that the sushi falls into her territory (she prepared it) and assumes that “the addressee shares this information” (304). The addressee can reply by repeating the *oishii*, but not the *deshoo*, as that would indicate that the item in question was in *her* information territory—a stance which could be taken up as somewhat arrogant, since

the addressee did neither prepare nor procure the sushi in question. In general, the fact that Japanese food is considered to be proper to Japanese territory underpins the concomitant epistemic and affective stances of Japanese people referring to it, just as American food is thought to be properly assessable by Americans only. Again, the use or nonuse of *deshoo*, when used by native speakers and incipient/progressing learners, indexes the corresponding stances (313–315). In relation to socialization into a foreign language and culture, the author concludes that “in order to become competent users of the epistemic stance marker *deshoo*, learners have to cognitively and socially orient themselves to the [native] participants’ experiences and actions,” by “learning the indexical associations between *deshoo* and the identities that emerge in the ongoing talk” (313). Needless to say, this kind of “learning” is very difficult to practice in the context of the classroom; “learners become competent users by paying attention to the emerging context of talk” (316) and by being “socialized into different kinds of affective and epistemic stance in social activities that routinely take place” (Kamio 1994), both at home, at school, and in society at large.

Chapter 14, by Ayala Fader, deals with “Language Socialization and Morality” (322–340). The author’s focus is on the discourse and practice of female socialization among Hasidic girls in Brooklyn, NY, where she has done her extensive fieldwork (also attested in numerous previous publications). The spirituality practiced among the Hasidic diverges from that of other Jewish communities, and distinguishes itself by a different attitude to secular affairs, especially when compared to the general Judeo-Christian morality of the West. Adopting a distinction made by Michel Foucault, the author establishes ethic behavior as a pathway to morality, for people to “transform themselves” (326; Foucault 1997, p. 262) by embodying “attachments to historically specific forms of truth” (326; Mahmood 2005, p. 34). This implies that the body is not seen as a “beast of burden,” or as the object of penance practices, as it is often the case in certain Christian spiritualities, where suffering, and in particular making the body suffer, was seen as the highest form of spiritual activity on earth (compare St. Teresa of Avila’s favorite saying “Either suffer or die” (*aut pati aut mori*), or the seventeenth century Canadian/French martyr St. Jean de Brébeuf, S.J., who used to scold and exhortate his body by exclaiming “Suffer, body, suffer” (*endure, corps, endure*). Hasidic girls are taught from their very young years to “sanctify” their bodies through modesty; this does not exclude the use of adornment, even vanity, as long as it is “‘channeled’ to serve Hasidic goals of adhering to God’s commandments” (329).

This “embodied discipline” (to paraphrase Foucault) is one of the main goals of socialization through language; repeated admonitions to observe verbal modesty (*tsnies* in Yiddish, from Hebrew *tsni’ut*) are heard throughout a girl’s life, accompanied by exhortations to show modesty in body posture. From early on, Hasidic children are trained in observing the many verbal and bodily manifestations of religious observance in connection with corporeal functions, as for instance when a mother, feeding two-year old twins, repeatedly utters the formula for “blessing,” even when the kids are not at all able to say the words, or are interested in practicing blessings themselves. Thus, as the author remarks, “from the time a Hasidic child is eating solid food, eating and prayer go hand in hand” (333); simultaneously, the

children “learn from their caregivers that Gentiles cannot control their eating and so just ‘dig in’ without sanctifying the act of eating” (334). The ultimate objective of such teaching is to have the children (in this case the young women) acquire a proper “discursive and practical moral consciousness through socialization practices” (335).

Fader’s chapter opens a window on a fascinating realm of embodied spirituality and morally infused secular practice, especially when seen against the backdrop of North American and general Gentile culture. It should be noted, however, that the notion of the body as a sacred place, indeed “a temple of God,” has roots also in Christian teachings, not least in the writings of St. Paul, who tells us that our bodies are “sanctuaries of the Holy Ghost” (I Cor 6:19) and that they are for holiness and purity; his dictum that “all things are permitted, not all are appropriate” (I Cor 6:12; Mahmood 2005, pp. 6, 12) seems to match the Hasidic notion of a conscious moral subject, cultivated through “technologies of the self” that include linguistic and discursive practices of socialization (335). (But then of course St. Paul, by his own admission, was a “Jew among Jews,” even though born in the early Diaspora; Acts 22:3).

Chapter 15 (341–364), “Language Socialization and Hierarchy,” by Kathryn M. Howard, “examines the discourses, processes, and practices by which children are socialized into hierarchical social relationships” (341). The author remarks that language is among the most powerful instruments for establishing and maintaining these relationships, not only by its use but also (and sometimes mainly) by its ability to reflect on its own practices, in what Michael Silverstein (1993) and others have called “metapragmatic” language use. “Hierarchy,” as the manifestation of social relationships (equality/inequality, intimacy/distance, authority/subordination, etc.) is more important in certain societies than in others; the North Thailand Muang community studied in this chapter distinguishes itself by a high degree of, and attention to, hierarchization in interaction (as it is also the case for standard Thai; “the Thai have no way to interact except in hierarchical terms,” as an earlier author has expressed it; Kirsch 1973, quoted 350). The roles inherent in these inequalities are both presupposed and entailed in participants’ semiotic activities (as noted by Silverstein 1985, quoted 342). The transmission of hierarchical values, then, across generations involves linguistic socialization, including the use and understanding of “the meanings, effects, and consequences of particular types of social conduct” (343). In other words, the “process of language socialization into social hierarchies involves becoming able to recognize the social meanings of behavior and to conduct oneself in recognizably social ways” (Silverstein 1985)

The empirical part of the chapter is taken up by the author’s field study of early socialization in a semirural northern Thai community, where the local dialect, Kam-Muang, is being downgraded as a means of social communication in the contexts of the schools, families, and even ordinary social interaction. Muang children are taught the proper reference to participants in speech events over a range of linguistic and extralinguistic devices marking the relative social positions of the interlocutors. The use of informal and intimate pronouns, for example, may be alternatively understood as marking lack of social training, intimacy, or even a particular regis-

ter (such as “masculinity”; 351—an option also known from other “hierarchically organized” languages such as Japanese). Both in the school context and outside of it, the Muang children are “exposed to routine language use, representations of language use, and discourses about language use” (352) that deal with, and demonstrate, the proper use of reference terms (where personal pronouns are in the minority, outdistanced by markers of kinship, social status, interaction roles, and so on). Even in peer group interacting, children showed a remarkable awareness of social hierarchy, as expressed in appropriate use of reference terms, often accompanied by self-criticizing or eliciting correcting intervention by either group members or adults.

The pervasive presence of this linguistic metadiscourse and the community’s “unwavering commentary” on participants’ social and linguistic conduct struck me as particularly interesting; but could it be the case that such interactions (at least partially) reflected what could be called “parental overcorrection” in the presence of an overhearer, such as a fieldworker? In my experience as a parent receiving visits from other parents with small children, I have frequently noticed how those visitors “overcorrected” their children for behavior which in the context of a family visit did not need correcting (as I was wont to tell the visitors). The need to reflect on proper behavior in one’s children when they are confronted with the outside world is certainly not a property of Thai parents alone; and some of the evidence referred to in the chapter could be due to an “observer effect,” as it is called in physics.

This kind of speculation aside, the chapter provides fascinating insights into a culture whose complexities of social and linguistic behaviors far surpass the common, Western pattern; it rightfully emphasizes the important role of language socialization even in societies like our own, where hierarchization is not so patently dependent on linguistic devices and discursive habitus, and the “practices of person reference” do not “sketch a particularly detailed social landscape” (359).

Chapter 15 (365–390) by Marjorie H. Goodwin and Amy Kyratzis, “Peer Language Socialization,” deals with the ways group relations are forged and maintained with the aid of language. The target of the chapter’s reported studies is the so-called peer group, in this context understood as comprising not only “same age peers who are not related to one another” but also “sibling-kin groups,” in which older children “take care of younger kin” (366). The study richly documents the extant literature on ways in which children build their social worlds, using systematic interactive practices and resources such as: evaluating (e.g., through storytelling, gossip, positive, and negative assessments); membership categorization (e.g., through identity selection, “relationship work,” “pretend play”); use of register and genre (e.g., through “voicing” and animating, by appropriating and “recycling” expressions picked up from adult caretakers, and by code switching).

In all this, it is important to note that peer group language socialization is, in a way, an “open-ended process”: the intended outcome is not just making the children “identical” replicas of the adults; just as often, the goal is to “subvert and challenge existing hierarchies” (379) by building new social relations. Interestingly, the authors mention the “unmotivated analytic mentality” that is often said to pervade conversation-analytically oriented studies, and point out that (following Stokoe and

Smithson 2002, p. 84), researchers working within the CA framework “use their background knowledge, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged, in the process of doing analysis” (373). The present reviewer concurs: there is indeed more to conversation ‘than is thought of in CA philosophy’ and, while acknowledging that “hierarchy is emergent and interactionally achieved” (382), it is also influenced, and indeed produced (not just as a “byproduct”; Stokoe and Smithson 2002), by social factors such as the “age make-up of the group” (382). As the authors remark in their conclusion, “an ethnographic perspective is also [sic!] needed to understand children’s categorizations and assessments” (Stokoe and Smithson 2002)

There are a few minor slips in this otherwise well-executed chapter (not “section” (375): “*quién te encurea?*” (371) should be *encuera*; and I must confess my puzzlement on noticing that, while in the bibliography, most authors and titles in foreign languages have been paid due diacritic respect (even the notoriously tricky Turkish “dotless i” is there!), the Scandinavian letters such as *ø* and *ö* are denied birthright (compare Jorgensen, Stenstrom for Jørgensen, Stenström, here and *pass.*).

The final chapter (17) in Part III, entitled “Language Socialization and Exclusion” (391–419) is by Inmaculada M. García-Sánchez, who applies a language socialization perspective on “social exclusion,” as demonstrated in the case of Moroccan immigrant children in southern Spanish schools. The author describes the various ways in which these children are “being made the ‘other’,” and are “socialized into marginalized identities” by their Spanish peers (392); often, this happens in collusion with teachers who are unable to unmask the hidden practices prevalent in the social world of early to mid-childhood or, in extreme cases, align with the Spanish children against the immigrants. Over time, these exclusionary practices may result in the immigrant children developing a “more enduring sense of alienation” (392); conversely, “positive relationships with peers have been shown to be essential in the successful inclusion of those children” (393)—and to be more important than well-intentioned “top-down” reforms of curricula and promotion of diversity.

The author uses her findings from weekly observations of a fourth-grade mixed cohort to show how the children’s interactional practices (such as “tattling,” “peer directing,” and “fueling the fire”) “play a major role in the construction of social exclusion” (394)—in particular because the teacher’s reaction to the excluding activities is markedly different in the case of the Moroccan versus the Spanish children. Thus, in the case of tattling, a Moroccan “tattle target” is summarily told to “stop fooling around already” (398), whereas in another encounter, the Spanish target of the tattling receives teacher encouragement and help (396). Interestingly, even the teacher’s choice of words and use of grammar serve to enhance this difference in treatment: “whereas the targeted Spanish child is positioned as a passive experienter who has, at most, *epistemic* responsibility, the Moroccan child is positioned as an active agent and, therefore, assigned full *moral* responsibility for his infraction” (398, my italics; a useful graphic representation of the various exclusionary practices and the “complex architecture” of the different alignment and participation frameworks is found on p. 410).

As the author remarks in her conclusion, children display a much more “sophisticated understanding of ethnic marginality” than teachers mostly assume. Ultimately, the “ascription of negative identities,” considered as a “social interac-

tional achievement” (415), has consequences for our understanding of the processes through which this “alienation” is constructed. Language is not just a macro-level instrument of “power and control”; on the microlevel as well, it has the “power to perpetuate social and ethnic inequalities” through “complex set[s] of teacher and student social practices” (Stokoe and Smithson 2002), as the chapter abundantly illustrates. Obviously, “there is a need for teachers and administrators to take into account the complexities of the children’s social worlds and the dynamics of power and social control that exist within them” (416).

A confusing error in a caption text occurs on p. 400: in Fig. 17.4 (“Peer Directives”), for “Tattletale—Target of Tattle” (erroneously copied from Fig. 17.1, “Tattling”), read “Peer Directive Issuer—Target of Peer Directive”).

## 5 Part IV

The short Part IV, “Aesthetics and Imagination,” draws our attention to what’s left out by the “normative descriptions of socialization”: the question how “normativity and creativity are integrated,” both into our lives and into our theoretical considerations (421). Importantly, when talking about socialization, we should focus on situations where creativity is displayed, and even encouraged, as in verbal play or artistic expressions.

In Chap. 18, “Language Socialization in Arts and Sciences” (425–442), Shirley Brice Heath argues (as she has done in a great number of previous publications) that visualization plays a big role in children’s socialization into the arts and sciences (425). The author draws attention to the fact that the modern separation of art and science is an artifact of our culture; in earlier civilizations as well as contemporary indigenous cultures, both “art and science carry close relationships with cosmology, religion, and beliefs about human origin and destiny” (425–426). As far as the visual is concerned, “seeing” not only provides access to information; “seeing *and* doing” (my emphasis) are necessary preconditions for children’s (and adults’) coordination of interaction (426). With regard to language, the author observes (based on her study of fieldwork done in the Australian bush) how “for many Aboriginal languages...young children’s learning of morphology and lexicon are [sic] interdependent with their close observation of the natural world” (430). In this connection, the contrast is between *primary* socialization in the home, the tribe, the playground, or the natural world in general, and the *secondary* socialization of the educational system, where linguistic competence is prioritized over visualization and dexterity (422). Concurrently, in the modern world, parents link children’s experiences (in sports, arts, parks, hobbies, etc.) to school topics in a “concerted cultivation” [that] looks ahead to formal education” but at the same time needs to be complemented by expansive curricula activities in “learning labels, handling instruments and technologies,” as well as by “dramatic role-play, visuospatial activities, and spectator events” at the primarily level (435), and not least gesture and collaborative work at later stages (436). In particular in the science laboratory, as in the artists’ studio, “the lives of those working are ‘joined,’” and “creative collaborators depend on

common definition of problems...and willingness to present evidence in a host of ways”(437), including multimodal, especially visual and gestural expressions that “translate into collaborative action” (Stokoe and Smithson 2002) which otherwise would not have been possible; the importance of such collaborative work and what has been called “science literacy” (I. Mey 2012) in this context cannot be overestimated.

Chapter 19 (443–482), “Language Socialization and Verbal Improvisation,” by Alessandro Duranti and Steven P. Black, deals with verbal improvisation as a “universal, even though its manifestation is subject to contextual variation and contextualization” (443). Improvisation, by its very definition, implies that something novel is created (as happens in word play), but also, that the ability to be creative has to be developed and encouraged with in a particular society’s typical and topical constraints. Even so, certain sociocultural similarities and connections may be established. Creativity is always dependent on routine: and routines are inculcated through meaningful repetition (“a key strategy for getting novices to acquire a given skill”; 444). As the Russian saying has it, *povtorenie mat’ucheniya*, “repetition is the mother of learning”; or, in the authors’ words, creativity depends on “the crucial role of repetition in development and apprenticeship” (446). The authors refer to Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of the “habitus,” by which what may appear as spontaneous improvisation (e.g., in playing the piano, one of Bourdieu’s “structuring structures”) is actually the “natural” result of many hours of drudgery (e.g., in practicing scalas and other Bourdieu’ian “structured structures”). Quoting Jean-François Dortier, and extending this line of thinking to language, it is said that “we believe [improvisations] all to be free and disembodied, whereas they are the product of deeply routed [sic] constraints and structures” (446; Dortier 2002, p. 5; note that “routed” probably should read “rooted”: the French original has *ancrées*, “anchored”).

Based on this distinction, the authors establish a difference between improvisation as much-needed flexibility when performing a task, and improvisation as an end in itself: “performance in play and other creative behaviors” (446 ff.). It is shown that improvisation is “ubiquitous” (450); its world-wide presence is attested through extracts from improvised performances realized in cultural contexts as different as represented by children in a suburban Californian family, Samoan boys and their pretend play, and the self-mocking behavior among the Zulu individuals living with AIDS/HIV in Durban, South Africa (451 ff.), most recently described by coauthor Black in another article (2013).

As the authors remark, “improvisation always implies a combination of conformity and innovation” (454); in addition, the improvisation has to be “recognizable” within the limits of the culture, as is especially evident in subcultures where the emphasis is on verbal improvisation, such as hip-hop and its “freestyle of rapid-fire, extemporaneous, articulate delivery,” where “members usually follow each other without missing a beat” (454; quoting Morgan 2009, p. 96).

The authors conclude that “[as] reflected in Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus*, it is when repetition becomes routinization that creativity becomes possible” (459). The implications of this view for early (and later) socialization and apprenticeship are portentous, and the authors’ richly documented and cogently reasoned chapter adds considerable weight to the debates around how to deal with important contemporary



issues in socialization and education, not least in the teaching and practice of linguistic skills.

Some minor cavils: Milman Parry did not “reconstruct” Homer (441), he “merely” (but importantly) redirected our view of the great poet and his work against the then current stream of the controversy between the “analysts” and the “autonomists,” by documenting the improvising poetic process as one that had not just died off with the bard, but was alive and well in many contemporary societies. And: Frank Hamilton Cushing died in 2000, not 1900 (455).

In her Chap. 20 (464–483), “Language Socialization and Verbal Play,” Karin Aronsson draws attention to the ways ethnographical and anthropological research on children’s play may offer “rich sites for exploring language socialization phenomena”; in doing this, it “will foreground the role of language in children’s play” (464–465). It appears that “language socialization practices are not seen as unilateral forms of transmission”; they involve “both the speaker’s move and the hearer’s uptake” (466). In particular, language functions as a “controlling device,” both to signal “this is play” and to allow or disallow access to the play situation. This is evidenced both in preschoolers’ organization of play, in the world of (computer) gamers with their ways of distinguishing between novices (“newbies”) and experienced players, and in the verbal teasing, practiced either both by adults or children, or by children among themselves (468–470).

But socialization is more than play or teasing: it sets up play hierarchies which resemble the hierarchies that children see functioning around them, both in the private life of their families and in the mediatized lives of popular groups such as the “Spice Girls” (471–473). One could refer here to earlier work by Rundquist (1992) as well as to contemporary research by Beers Fägersten (2012) on family interactions, where it is shown how family members construe their identities through appropriate (and sometimes inappropriate, like in swearing) use of language. Interestingly, as author Aronsson points out, a phenomenon such as code-switching (especially in its avatar of “crossing”—a kind of unauthorized foreign-language insertion into one’s discourse; Rampton 2001) may serve as a harbinger of more permanent shifts, often leading to language change or even language death (477–478).

The chapter does an excellent job of pinpointing the various areas where “serious effects” of socialization may occur and propagate themselves through the language system and the concomitant social hierarchies. Language choice and code-switching, as they are often used in verbal play situations, deal with access and participant roles in important ways. “Verbal play is serious business,” as the author concludes (479); it definitely goes beyond “Rousseauan [sic] playful explorations” (480).

## 6 Part V

The volume’s Part V deals with “Language and Culture Contact.” Its chapters highlight the role that language socialization plays in processes of language change and transformation, and how it affects the way we look at, and value, “bilingual-

ism, multilingualism, and multiculturalism” (485). In all this, the importance of language ideologies cannot be overestimated; in particular, “speaker agency” may resist or modify certain registers, when seen as indexing affiliation to a particular group (486). As the editors observe, this has “consequences for notions of language boundaries and maintenance” (Rampton 2001), including efforts at language revitalization and the protection of endangered idioms.

In Chap. 21 (493–514), “Language Socialization and Language Ideologies,” Kathleen C. Riley examines the ways “language ideologies are intrinsically implicated in all language socialization processes, and vice versa” (493). Not only are these ideologies responsible for how socialization practices are evaluated; in addition, they distinctly influence those “regimenting” practices, and cyclically determine their evaluation, with the result that the ideologies in question guarantee “endless reproduction in favor of the powers that be” (494). The chapter scrutinizes the influence of language ideologies on socialization in three areas: that of language acquisition, that of language’s use in context, and finally that of the “value” of language forms against the backdrop of hegemonic structures. As to the first, there is a contrast between certain societies where the belief in explicit language instruction contrasts with ideologies (common to other societies) according to which the children will “pick up” the language by themselves, and where it is more important to instill socially correct behavior in the learners rather than received language forms. Specifically in early language acquisition, ideology plays a major role, as the author abundantly shows in her discussion of various “language acquisition ideologies” (LAIs) over a broad spectrum of languages (495). But also the second and third areas both underlie the ideologically driven values attributed to certain ways of speaking (relative to gender and ethnicity). Various ethnolinguistic, modal, and varietal ideologies shape the behavior and learning patterns of individuals across families, schools, social institutions, and so on. Oftentimes, those ideologies take the shape of attributing certain superior qualities to forms of speaking and writing that are considered “inherently better” suited to promote individual intellectual advance or promote national identity (498). Especially in a (post)colonial surrounding, this may result in “dis-socializing” certain users, such as the stereotypical “silent Asian girls” in an American university seminar, or college students in India who have no access to English at home (499). As far as bilingualism versus monolingualism is concerned, an important distinction is that between “subtractive” and “additive” bilingualism, where the former is supported by an LAI that stresses the possibility of “successfully learning a dominant language, while also maintaining one’s minority tongue” (500; a problematic that is also addressed by author He in her Chap. 25 of the current volume); in contrast, acquisition of a second language in the “subtractive model ‘undermines the successful acquisition of either language’ and results in what sometimes has been called ‘semi-lingualism’” (Hansegård 1968).

As an example of how these factors play out in reality, the author refers to her fieldwork in bilingual communities where French is (one of) the major language(s), both in the USA, Canada, and former colonial territories (such as Cameroon and the Marquesas). The ideological dynamics outlined in the beginning of the chapter are politically important and socially effective in what is commonly called the

*francophonie*, a political-ideological construct by which the French language, as spoken across the world, is attributed certain qualities that make it superior to other idioms (504).<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, when confronted with a choice between English and French as the dominant language in embattled francophone areas, the indigenous speakers often seem to prefer French, as in some First Nation communities of Ontario and Québec (507), thereby resisting the historical dominance of English. In a reverse movement, the French that is spoken in those areas does not conform to the norms and rules enforced elsewhere in the *francophonie*, and its speakers ironically distance themselves from, and discriminate against, native French speakers who want to get a foothold in the Canadian society (compare that a native (mainland) French-speaking friend of mine, Laurette, who used to earn part of her living by teaching French in Ontario high schools, was often told that her French was “too good” for this particular educational environment!).

In her conclusion, the author warns against language ideologies that place great emphasis on “linguistic mastery,” while disregarding the different communicative norms that obtain even within the same “linguistic variety”—a disregard which may result in “communicative breakdowns that...frequently contribute to social structural inequalities, and even sometimes to global-scale rifts” (509).

Chapter 22, “Language Socialization and Language Shift” (515–535) by Paul B. Garrett, discusses socialization and its role in the particular events called “language shifts.” These shifts, being a form of “language contact,” usually occur in what the author calls “conditions of stark inequality” (515); as a consequence, “the study of language shift...requires careful attention to the workings of power, both in and through language” (Hansegård 1968), as social processes like “bilingualism, language shift, and other contact-related phenomena...are ultimately rooted in relationships of hierarchy, dominance, and subordination” (516). Language contact, however, is very seldom a stable process: its effects range from “stable bilingualism” to “language death,” with all the transient stages that lie in between (517); here, our “key areas of inquiry” should be informed by the question of (in Monica Heller’s words) “who is doing what, and with what resources” (518; see Heller 2007). In this connection, it is just as (or even more) important to study “local ideologies of language” in order to unveil power’s workings, as it is to document the influence of macroeconomic processes and global changes, as attested by Don Kulick’s studies of the Papua New Guinea community of Gapun, where “external factors” (influx of missionaries and international capital) worked their way into the language use only through the locals’ appropriation of the power structures, as these are symbolized in concepts borrowed from TokPisin, the “invasive” language (519–520).

As in the previous chapter, ideologies of language use are shown to provide an important clue to understanding the practices involved (518); this is also demonstrated in the author’s vivid discussion of the situation on St. Lucia, where Kwéyòl, the local Creole, or *patwa*, is pitched against the dominant language, (vernacular)

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<sup>5</sup> The same considerations could be applied to other, similar ideological constructs like the *lusofonia*, established for the realm of Portuguese-speaking areas (motherland and former colonies, such as Brazil, Angola, Cabo Verde, Timor Leste, or Moçambique).

English. The bilingual situation in St. Lucia represents the classical pattern with the older residents mostly being monolingual in Kwéyòl, the children mostly preferring English, and the adults hovering in between at various stages of transition. Interestingly, “most St. Lucian adults subscribe to the...notion of subtractive bilingualism: it is widely and firmly believed that Kwéyòl has a profoundly detrimental effect on children’s acquisition of English” (524), and that therefore, children should be taught English before they are allowed to speak Kwéyòl (which is believed to “come naturally”). The author illustrates his findings by referring to three instances of early language socialization, from which it becomes clear that the result of this attitude is that children in St. Lucia will at most acquire a passive understanding of the native idiom; but as the author remarks, “for the most part, the children’s lack of proficiency in Kwéyòl goes unnoticed and without comment”—and besides, as it is said, “the child’s English will be stronger for it” (531).

While in general, bilingualism—in this case “the ability to draw on both English and Kwéyòl as communicative resources” (532)—must be considered an asset, the bilingual situation in St. Lucia, with its “marking” of the two idioms as age- and situation-dependent codes with varying social values, reflects the “ongoing shift from a primarily agricultural to a primarily service-based economy,” with the attendant need to promote (a local variety of) English, due to the demands made by the tourist industry and higher education. The lesson to take home from this is that “language socialization research provides a useful perspective on language shift in that it avoids conceptualizing human development as a matter of individuals somehow internalizing pre-existing... systems of linguistic forms and cultural knowledge,” and instead makes us focus on “the complex linkages between locally situated, micro-level developmental processes and broader, macro-level processes of socio-cultural reproduction, transformation and change” (532–533).

Patricia Baquedano-López and Ariana Mangual Figueroa discuss “Language Socialization and Immigration” in their Chap. 23 (536–563), where they “review language socialization research that has engaged the study of language mediated interactions and experiences at the intersection of migration,” paying special attention to “how immigrant groups negotiate participation in, and influence, new communities and social institutions” (537; commas added). Here, the emphasis is not just on “the transformation processes that occur at the individual level (as in an immigrant incorporating into the larger society), but also at the societal level,” in the public discourses that create “nationhood” (541). Here, “language socialization research offers a way to productively study the tensions between macro-political and micro-interactional social phenomena” (Heller 2007).

An interesting, “bidirectional” aspect of immigration-related studies in education and schooling is revealed in the complex role of immigrant youths and children (544): on the one hand, they are novices that have to be socialized into the community (just like, and partly by, their parents); on the other hand, they often function as active participants in multiparty interactions, where the older immigrants rely on their children for interpreting and guidance (545). In contrast, the schools themselves often project a negative picture of young immigrants, which results in low “gender, class-based, and ethnic group expectations” (546), with concomitant poor

academic results on their part; actually, once a perspective of “deficit” rather than “difference” has been established, it becomes almost impossible for a learner to escape that straitjacket and “become a different kind of learner” (548). In addition to these educational problems, when it comes to “socialization of religious and social identity, the tension and conflict are also difficult to resolve” (553), as shown by the example of Latina mothers who would leave church services in protest against the English-only language policies applied in a context where the majority of the congregation spoke Spanish (553).

In conclusion, the authors again draw attention to what earlier was called “the bidirectionality of novices and experts” in the socialization process, in particular as regards the acquisition and use of the dominant language, where immigrant children often take “expert” roles in relation to their parents as “novices”: The children are “very much social actors who produce culture in the course of everyday activities” (555). Indeed, “the voices of immigrant children in social institutions...demand a departure from the ways we do and understand research on child development” (554), by acknowledging “the children’s acts of innovation and norm-breaking—for example the linguistic and morally complex work that children do as interpreters for adults across social institutions” (555).

Chapter 24 (564–586), by Patricia A. Duff, treats of “Second Language Socialization,” where the term itself, “second,” is “sometimes controversial” in that it invokes a temporal sequencing (L1, L2, L3, etc.), along with a downgrading in terms of importance, L1 being considered the canonical “dominant language.” As the author remarks, a first language may “lose ground, functionally, to an additional language, which then may become the person’s dominant language” (565). Additionally, a former L2 (e.g. a colonial language) may have displaced the “heritage language” and become the dominant L1 for many, especially younger speakers; the effort to “revitalize” the original idiom may invoke ideologies of linguistic, political, cultural and other kinds; this often results in speakers’ and learners’ alienation from the very language it was supposed to strengthen, and defend against an encroaching L2. Despite the obvious similarities between acquiring a first and a second language, the complexities involved in L2 acquisition and teaching “compound those in L1 socialization” (567); for one thing, the opportunities for learners to interact with native speakers vary greatly with the conditions they live under, with the time they have at their disposal being often rather limited. In addition, learners’ motivation may differ widely from one group to another (depending on age, status, prior experience, and so on). In the author’s words, we are looking at “competing linguistic ideologies, identities, and practices,” both in relation to “macro-societal contexts” and to “micro-linguistic practices” (569). In many multilingual communities (the author cites the case of the Fulbe in Northern Cameroon), young learners “are socialized into multiple community languages and ideologies” (572), including the home language Fulfulde (L1), and the L2s of French and Arabic, each with their concomitant set of cultural and social values, such as a different script, varying expectations on the learners, and vastly different ways of instruction and practice (e.g., storytelling and L1-dialogue in the domestic sphere, rote learning of Arabic sacred

texts in the Qur'anic schools, versus independent use of the secular French, as used in the public sphere of schooling and the media).

A factor that has not yet attained recognized status everywhere is the effect of social and cultural values such as embodied in gender norms, honorific speaking, and the proper body comportment accompanying the language. In the Japanese concentration camps in Indonesia during World War II, one of the major sources of conflicts between camp personnel and the (mostly Dutch) detainees was the former's insistence on the latter's assuming the correct body position when being talked to by, or addressing, a superior. The European prisoners considered it contrary to their dignity to "kowitz" to their guards; but when I myself came to Japan later in life, I found that the practice of "bowing deeply" to be just the "local" way of marking the sociocultural values appropriate to that particular society's interpersonal relations, by adopting a concomitant behavior which is not thought of as in any way offensive or demeaning. Yet, precisely such poorly understood, hidden social norms often come into conflict with what is expected of students in L2 classrooms (where gender restrictions are limiting group work), or in adult classes for foreigners (where Western women in Japan "resist the highly feminized polite forms of the language [Japanese], involving high pitch and feminized intonation"; 574). Similarly, the expectations that students face in academic L2 discourse often do not match their previous work and life experiences; as a result, their achievements are often (objectively as well as subjectively) underrated in comparison to their Western peers, as author Duff's experience as an L2 teacher and researcher in a variety of contexts (e.g., Canada, Hungary) amply demonstrates.

Overall, the author concludes, L2 socialization is far from being the "relatively straightforward linear process that can be completed within a short period of time" (580), which it is frequently implied to be—not only in the implicit as well as explicit discourses of the various authorities and institutions but also, and not least, in the opinions voiced by the linguistic specialists and the learners themselves.

In Chap. 25 (586–609), entitled "Heritage Language Socialization," Agnes Weiyun He tackles the subject of the so-called Heritage Language (hereafter HL), "a language that is used at or inherited from home and that is different from the language used in mainstream society"—a language that "may delight, enrich, or comfort us, or it may embarrass or annoy us" (587). The author points out that an HL, just like the heritage culture itself, is a complex and hybrid phenomenon, which not just is based on notions of "heritage" ("where does one come from") but just as much on the ways the HL speaker and his or her language function within (or as the case may be, outside of) continually "changing contextual dimensions" (588). Language and culture being "mutually constitutive" (588), there is no maintaining or learning the HL outside of a culture; conversely, the culture cannot be maintained unless it has an HL to "hook" onto.

A further element in this complex pattern is the identity of the HL speaker—by definition likewise a complex one, inasmuch as the speaker lives in a context of "heritage" that determines him or her as an HL speaker. Conversely, the speaker may decide to not belong to, and withdraw from, the heritage context and try to adjust to the mainstream language and culture (in most cases, English). As the author

remarks, “HL maintenance is profoundly connected to speakers’ attitudes and values” (591). In her review of the literature (592 ff.), the author underscores the role of this “language ideology” in efforts to maintain and further the use of an HL, and correctly points out that “promoting bilingualism at the societal level is a critical requirement in many language maintenance efforts” (592); also, ethnic identity and the values associated with belonging to an ethnic group “are a key factor” in HL development (593). In addition, but not least importantly, the “co-constructed, interactive nature of HL socialization” is singled out as a lodestar for future research (594).

The remainder of the chapter consists of a longitudinal “case study,” in which a “composite” adult learner, “Jason” is followed through the various steps of his development as an HL speaker in various interactional contexts (598 ff.). In this connection, the author posits a collection of hypotheses that “describe and predict the key variables responsible for [success in] CHL [Chinese heritage language] development” (595), and illustrates her hypotheses by pointing out the ways in which “Jason” adjusts to his environment, and also actively influences it by his linguistic and other choices. She concludes that “HL development is grounded in the learner’s participation in social practice and continuous adaptation to the unfolding, multiple activities that constitute the social and communicative worlds that s/he inhabits” (605)—to which the present reviewer can only say “Amen.”

Finally, in view of the importance and weight of the author’s “ten hypotheses” mentioned above, I will briefly mention them here, as they can serve as an incitement to further promote language socialization in the context of this, admittedly “fledgling, area of heritage language research” (587). The ten hypotheses (595–597) all postulate a positive correlation between success in Chinese heritage language (CHL) development and the following variables:

- (1) “Rootedness”: the learner’s desire to be rooted in his or her heritage language
- (2) “Benefits”: envisaged social and economic rewards and opportunities
- (3) “Interaction”: the immediate reward of communicating in situated activities
- (4) “Positive stance”: the English-speaking community’s positive evaluation of the CHL
- (5) “Choice”: using the CHL by choice rather than by necessity
- (6) “Diverse input”: the need for a rich and varied input, not just in the family but also from the outside
- (7) “Discourse norms”: sensitivity to the discourse norms valid in the English-speaking community
- (8) “Enrichment”: seeing the CHL as a positive feature depends on one’s successfully creating a niche in the mainstream world
- (9) “Multiplicity”: the need for multiple identities (overlapping or competing)
- (10) “Transformation”: engaging in multiple linguistic codes, while at the same time potentially transforming them and the surrounding speech community.

Angela M. Nonaka, in her Chap. 26, “Language Socialization and Endangerment” (610–630), draws our attention to the fact that while the term “endangered languages” is relatively new (“post-1980”; 610), the phenomenon itself is not; and irrespective of whether it should be considered a natural development or a “threat to

biocultural diversity” (613), the current situation of “endangerment” is marked by an alarming shift in tempo: Languages are disappearing at an ever-increasing rate.

While earlier linguistic studies mostly were concerned about the loss of linguistic diversity (especially since many disappearing languages never got to be described properly, and thus were taking their singularities with them into the grave), more recent efforts have begun to try and reverse the trend to “language death” by “revitalizing” threatened languages (611), in addition to merely “salvaging” linguistic material that is on its way to extinction; the case of Rapa Nui (Easter Island), is one instance among others, where “revitalizing” efforts have borne some fruit (619).

Based on her own fieldwork, the author then describes in more detail the endangerment of a particular, recent sign language that emerged in Ban Kor, a northern Thai village with relatively many deaf people (620 ff.); this language, which emerged as a practical way of communicating from hearing to deaf people and vice versa, could maintain itself in the presence of the official Thai sign language for more than three generations, even though its longer-lasting survival is not assured.

The author concludes that studies of language socialization are valuable in the context of endangered languages because they allow us, as in the Ban Kor case, to “holistically elucidate processes of language shift” by generating “robust and internally diverse data corpora that are currently missing from most endangered language archives” (624).

The present reviewer feels the need to take exception to certain postulated trends concerning the development of anthropology and linguistics as separate disciplines. What the author writes about the two having separated only after WWII, is construed in a narrow US American perspective, and does not take into account the robust (independent, but cooperating) anthropological and linguistic traditions that existed, and still exist, in Europe. One could, for instance, quote the many-faceted traditions of research that emerged in the wake of missionary activities—the Vienna school around its founder, Professor Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt, SVD (died 1954), with its journal *Anthropos* (from 1906 onwards) being a good example. But also outside of those milieus, we find eminent anthropologists working in the sociological tradition of Marcel Mauss, or linguists-anthropologists (like Émile Benveniste in France or Georg Morgenstierne in Norway) as natural examples of the two traditions working side by side, without interfering, but still having fruitful contacts; the more recent “departmentalization” of these disciplines on the European continent must be seen as a secondary effect due to the influence of certain North American paradigms of research and university management.

Endangered languages are also the subject of Debra A. Friedman’s final Chap. 27, “Language Socialization and Language Revitalization” (631–647). Revitalization is often referred to as “reversal of language shift,” the latter understood as the process by which speakers of a minority language abandon that language in favor of a dominant, usually majority idiom (631). This process, as does its potential reversal, happens on several levels: on the macrolevel, one encounters political decisions, economic conditions, and language policies; on the microlevel, studies focusing on the minorities themselves and their communities as “active agents” in the socialization processes that accompany and dominate eclipse and reversal, are gaining in importance and number. In particular, existing (conscious or subliminal) language



ideologies have been shown to be major factors in determining whether policies of language reversal are successful or fail (632).

The author illustrates her arguments by referring to a number of concrete cases of efforts at language revitalization, such as the successful attempts to reintroduce and strengthen the use of a Northern Italian Rhaeto-Romance dialect, Nones, into the mainstream of public and educational life, as compared to the efforts to revitalize the Paiute language, spoken within the territories of the Navajo Nation of the south-western USA, where local ideologies about language practices versus the use of formal schooling constitute a conflict that resulted in children “increasingly using English when engaging in interactions with their caregivers who insisted on speaking Paiute to them” (635; see also Bunte 2009 on “local ethnotheories” and their sometimes negative impact on language revitalization). Language socialization research becomes important in this context because of “its emphasis on language use as a set of ideologically mediated cultural practices” (632); the author here echoes a theme that also has informed earlier chapters. As to the particular role of children as “active participants in the co-construction and reconstruction of social and cultural knowledge” (636), the author states that sometimes, “some system of formal schooling may be the only means of passing the language on to the younger generations” (639). However, experiences with native communities in the Americas have identified a major problem with such educational efforts: Treating the native language as a “decontextualized object,” to be studied in a formal context, will not result in language revitalization, but rather in a rejection of the educators’ efforts to “bring back the language from the brink.” As an example, the author adduces the case of the failed project of developing computerized teaching materials for the White Mountain Apache dialect in Arizona; “from the community perspective, [the language] was part of daily life, and could only be learned through the performance of activities that constituted this life, such as baking bread or chopping wood” (639). In other cases, the viable “people ideology” was not about language revitalization, but about using language to get along in the world; and for this, an “international language” was considered more appropriate, as the case of the Ukrainian language attests: although being “the official language of an independent nation state, it is far from hegemonic in its titular nation” (640); the “pure language” that is taught in the schools, and to which all officially subscribe, is on many occasions (especially among younger people) replaced by Russian, which “retains symbolic capital as an international language” (643) and as a family language in many Ukrainian homes.

In the end, language revitalization is always a question of “whose language” one speaks (cf. Mey 1985): if it is a language of social prestige and opportunities, one wants to keep it and become more competent in it; if it is the language of a “dis-dained” [not “distained”!; 633] minority, one might want to get rid of it and change to a more prestigious idiom, as the case of the failed teacher education project in the Guarani region of São Paulo state in Brazil demonstrates. Rather than becoming more proficient in their native language, the potential learners questioned the very usefulness of the effort; for all practical purposes, they wanted to be “alphabetized” in Portuguese (Cavalcanti 2001). Successful “immersion” programs like the

preschool “language nests” in the Maori culture, discussed by the author (640), are only viable if there is a follow-up in the social conditions under which the learners live. The predominant role of ideological viewpoints and the resulting contradictory attitudes and beliefs with regard to revitalization of language (and its use/usefulness) in daily life, can only be understood via a thorough examination of the social practices that create the ideology and are sustained by it. As the author concludes (mirroring the views expressed elsewhere in the volume): If we want to “unravel the mysteries of the language revitalization paradox” (645), there is a need for a “long-term examination of socialization” across a wide range of national, political, social, educational, and other contexts.

## 7 Concluding Remarks

*The Handbook of Language Socialization* is a valuable resource for anybody who studies, or is professionally engaged in the field of socialization in and through language. Workers in L2 education, language schooling in ethnic minorities, endangered languages, early and peer language socialization, to name a few areas among many, will find much that is useful for their theoretical advancement and their practical everyday activities. The gamut of topics discussed is multifarious and comprehensive and I cannot see that anything of importance has been left out—perhaps with the exclusion of the socialization taking place in the realm of computer interaction and communication on the Internet (as in texting, gaming, emailing, SMS-ing, and other social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and so on). A special chapter on “Socialization into Sign Language(s)” could also have been helpful (as it is, there are only isolated references to American sign language (ASL) and a few other sign languages throughout the book).

The work distinguishes itself by being almost completely free of typographical and other moments of surface irritation; the few infelicities that I discovered have mostly been noticed and remarked upon in the places where they occurred. With a few exceptions, the internal cross-references are optimal; only in the last few chapters one has the feeling that the authors did not always consult what had been written a couple of chapters earlier, such that we experience a certain repetitiousness when authors refer to earlier work of their coauthors, irrespective of the fact that these results had just been mentioned and discussed in their respective chapters. As for the Index, it is generally helpful, but a number of authors and geographical locations, mentioned in the chapters (such as M.M. Bakhtin, B. Butterworth, V.N. Voloshinov, Rossel Island, and so on) are not referred to in the Index, whereas obvious references (e.g., to the authors’ own respective chapters in the book) were perhaps not really all that necessary. As mentioned earlier, the bibliographies are appended to each chapter, which is a great service to the reader, even though it undoubtedly has resulted in a certain duplication of efforts and additional pages in a work that is already quite bulky.

All such minor cavils aside, I conclude that the editors have done a stellar job of composing, commenting on, and organizing a host of current viewpoints into

an intelligent and intelligible whole; for this, they deserve our thanks and heartfelt congratulations.

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