

Istvan Kecskes and Laurence R. Horn (eds). 2007. *Explorations in Pragmatics: Linguistic, Cognitive and Intercultural Aspects*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. Pp. vi + 348.

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Research on linguistic communication follows many objectives and paradigms, it is also characterised by a rather free use of specialist terminology. The use of the term 'pragmatics' is one such example: while for some it is a branch of linguistics that originated in attempts to account for the residue of syntax and semantics (e. g. Horn and Ward 2004; Matthews 2007), for others it concerns a social use of any means of communication available to humans (Mey 2006). While for some it is a highly theoretical enterprise (e. g. Levinson 1983; Kadmon 2001; Jaszczolt 2002; Huang 2007), for others it is a more practical enterprise aimed at investigating and facilitating mutual understanding, or, as Mey (2001: 6) puts it, 'pragmatics comprises everything that characterizes people as users of language'. It can also be seen as adding a functional, in the sense of social, cognitive, and cultural, perspective to the study of language on its various levels of analysis (Verschueren 1999). Geographical demarcations are also employed, where the Anglo-American tradition is more formal and comprises syntax/semantics/pragmatics interfaces, lexical pragmatics, historical (Gricean) pragmatics, computational pragmatics and cognitive science, while continental European tradition is sociology- and functionalism-oriented and largely formalization-free (Horn and Ward 2004: xi). The collection edited by Kecskes and Horn upholds the latter understanding and is suitably broad in scope, but it also takes seriously the Anglo-American conception and gives due space to some of the seminal approaches there. The title is pertinent: just as modern pragmatics has been compared to the process of colonization of new, unknown territories (Mey 2001, after Leech), so *Explorations in Pragmatics* offer a breadth that results from 'colonizing' some new, underresearched areas which are of primary theoretical and practical importance. As the Editors say in the Introduction, the authors 'represent all angles of pragmatics' (p. 1) and the perspectives they take owe a lot to the developments in areas as diverse as semantics/pragmatics interface, historical linguistics based on evolutionary biology, cognitive and developmental psychology, and intercultural communication. The

collection also shows that ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ don’t constitute an alternative of free choices but are, or ought to be, constitutive of all kinds and flavours of pragmatics. This is the main message over and above the individual contributions, to the discussion of which I now turn.

The structure and content of the volume are as follows. Part I is devoted to philosophical and linguistic aspects of pragmatics and its opening address is John Searle’s ‘What is language: Some preliminary remarks’, setting the tone with a bold statement that the philosophy of language can be credited with the most seminal achievements of all philosophical enterprise in the past 125 years. We soon discover, however, that most philosophers of language get it wrong in that they don’t treat language as a natural phenomenon, i. e. as ‘a natural extension of non-linguistic biological capacities’ (p. 7, see also Searle 1995). These biological foundations of language are manifested in the property of intentionality, which is further explained in terms of its formal features, familiar from Speech Act Theory: propositional content, conditions of satisfaction, and the direction of fit. Just as (intentional) mental states can be characterized by these properties, so can linguistic acts. Further, both linguistic and prelinguistic consciousness are characterized by the possession of categories of space, time, causation, agency and object. The core of the argument is that prelinguistic consciousness is very much like linguistic consciousness but it lacks syntactic structures which can be manipulated to render more sophisticated complex concepts. Contra Fodor and Davidson, Searle assigns a more moderate role to syntax; to put it simply, it is not a landmark from which thought springs out but merely a step through which it becomes more sophisticated. Animal thought can have unstructured propositional content; human ability to use symbols gives us reference and predication, and hence propositional structure. The argument then develops to show that meaning conventions, compositionality, generativity, juxtaposed with social commitments, create human language. This language is constitutive of society: ‘it creates, and partly constitutes what it describes’ (p. 31). Big questions are addressed in this paper, such as what is language and how language relates to society. However, one is left wondering about the extent to which the big issues cloud the precise inference in argumentation: just as in his book *Intentionality* (Searle 1983), Searle leaves many aspects of intentionality unresolved. He proposes the so-called ‘double level of intentionality’ (p. 23 and Searle 1983: 27-28), the gist of which is that the mental states impose, somehow or other, the property of intentionality (‘aboutness’)

onto linguistic expressions, endowing them with conditions of satisfaction. Speakers ‘impose’ intentionality on their utterances by ascribing to them conditions of satisfaction of the corresponding psychological states. Linguistic expressions are not intrinsically intentional: they are made so by speakers. Now, as I argued extensively in Jaszczolt 1999 (see esp. pp. 104-111), linguistic expressions *are* intrinsically intentional. The double level is an unnecessary theoretical burden which could have been avoided had Searle acknowledged the rich phenomenological tradition of research on intentionality of consciousness instead of reinventing the concepts *ab initio*. Since language is there considered to be a vehicle of thought, then intentionality need not be ‘conferred upon it’, it belongs to it inherently. Reference to the pre-Austin-and-Searle sources is absent in spite of being essential: 18<sup>th</sup>-century philosophy of Thomas Reid, 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century phenomenologists (Brentano, Husserl, Reinach, Pfänder, Daubert, Marty, Bühler) should be credited here with laying foundations for the theory of intentionality of mental acts and for investigating acts of communication later deemed ‘speech acts’). Answers to many pertinent questions can be found there, such as what entities can possess intentionality, how exactly it can be related to human intentions, as well as characterization of what we now call speech acts. Phenomenological research also helps address the most pertinent question as to by what criteria we can say that the foundations of language lie before propositional thought became structured, or by what precise criteria, apart from murky terminological assumptions of what intentionality stands for, the biological basis of intentionality counts as a biological foundation of language. In this light, Fodor’s stance that thought requires syntax and Davidson’s view that language is a prerequisite of thought begin to look more compatible with Searle’s outlook than Searle is willing to admit: delimit intentionality, cut out dual level, and the controversy vanishes.

The ‘explorations’ live up with perhaps less grand but much more precise and demonstrable issues addressed in Horn’s ‘Toward a Fregean pragmatics: Voraussetzung, Nebengedanke, Andeutung’, where the three terms are translated respectively as ‘presupposition for singular expressions’, ‘presupposition for quantified expressions’, and ‘conventional implicature’. For post-Gricean pragmaticists, the article is a sheer joy to read: it traces the history of these seminal concepts and offers a cutting edge discussion of Frege’s analysis of them. Analysing Frege’s and Strawson’s rejection of disjunctive negation exemplified in (1b) for (1a)

in the light of the last thirty years of research on the scope of negation in natural language is a welcome reminder to always assess critically our great masters.

- (1a) Kepler died in misery.
- (1b) Kepler did not die in misery or 'Kepler' does not refer.

Although the 'duality of use' of negation is still creating problems in that the debates concerning (i) the exact content of the semantic representation and (ii) the process of pragmatic inference are still lively and fierce, using these debates as background for analysing Frege is very welcome. Going beyond Frege, to forgotten albeit pertinent philosophers such as J. P. N. Land, is yet another example of an honest endeavour to avoid reinventing the wheel which happens much too often in the history of pragmatics – speech act theory and theory of intentionality discussed above being a prime example. To continue on Horn's search for sources, the fashionable term 'what is said' is aptly compared to Frege's 'thought'. Finally, in a more forward-looking manner, Grice's conventional implicature is resurrected and applied to definite descriptions, offering a very satisfactory analysis of definites as expressions that conventionally convey uniqueness. Horn's paper is an exemplary piece of work on which to train young researchers to think critically and across paradigms. It will become essential reading for my pragmatics and philosophy of language courses at Cambridge.

Cognitive aspects of pragmatics occupy Part II of the collection. Moeschler's 'The role of explicature in communication and in intercultural communication' discusses intercultural misunderstanding and attempts to locate it on the level of propositional content understood in a contextualist (Recanati 2005) way, as a development of the logical form of the sentence. Moeschler opts for a relevance-theoretic version of this unit called an *explicature*. The analysis can be of interest both to theoreticians and more practically minded linguists researching interlanguage pragmatic skills. What is perhaps most controversial is the attempt to locate a wide range of culprits of such misunderstandings in the somewhat artificially expanded notion of explicature. It is indeed true that intercultural misunderstandings happen because the illocutionary force or propositional attitude are misattributed by the addressee. However, the relevance-theoretic attempt to subsume such concepts under 'explicature' necessitates adding an extra level to the definition, namely that of a

‘higher-level explicature’ which is not a straightforward ‘development of the logical form’ of the uttered sentence. Although the term has been accepted in relevance-theoretic research to account for non-assertive illocutionary forces and attitudes expressed for example in discourse connectives, there are strong grounds for questioning its methodological utility. In short, Moeschler’s analysis of misattribution of intentions such as taking a request for a question is sound and valid, and so is the contention that this part of utterance content is not merely implied. The tool of an explicature, however, muddles a clear picture that can be conceptualized in terms of illocutions and intentions. Next, Ruiz de Mendoza and Baicchi offer a so-called Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model of communicative scenarios in their ‘Illocutionary constructions: Cognitive motivation and linguistic realization’. Invoking metonymy, they argue that communicators’ knowledge of illocutionary acts is systematized into so-called illocutionary scenarios and then applied to relevant situations of discourse. However, this application is not mechanical but instead makes active use of the assessment of power relations, politeness, freedom from imposition, degree of prototypicality of a speech act, and degree of cost-benefit. While these factors are undoubtedly influential and point correctly to the importance of situational meaning, subsuming them under a politeness model, or alternatively spelling them all out leaving politeness as a superordinary term, would be methodologically more accurate.

In the following contribution, ‘“A good Arab is *not* a dead Arab –a racist incitement”’: On the accessibility of negated concepts’, Giora offers an excellent and thought-provoking analysis of the psychological aspects of negation. She demonstrates through experimental evidence and theoretical argumentation that concepts are not suppressed under negation but instead remain active and ready for retrieval in the following discourse. In some cases, such as embedding in a conditional construction, negated concepts can even pass for affirmation in the minds of the addressees (see p. 132). This is a remarkably insightful analysis that sheds light on the semantics and pragmatics of natural language negation and is of direct relevance to its formal treatments where strict rules of referent accessibility should instead reflect the graded salience of negated concepts.

Finally, Part III is perhaps of most direct interest to the readers of this journal as it concerns intercultural aspects of pragmatics. We are now in the domain of sociopragmatics and cross-cultural pragmatics. The opening paper by Mey, ‘Developing pragmatics interculturally’, sets the scene and puts forward a set of

pertinent objectives. The main message is that pragmatics, as a study of the use of language that is always embedded in a culture or cultures, should define intra- and inter-culturality. He aptly points out that '[a] culture is always a "subculture" ' (p. 169): there are many factors that sum up to a particular behaviour of a social group or an individual. The rising habit of coffee-drinking in China is one good example of such a culturally complex phenomenon, where, as Mey says, '[p]eople have the right to conserve, but also to change and adapt their culture and language whenever they feel the need to do so' (p. 174). This is certainly true, but with the proviso that this change is facilitated not only by conscious intentions but also by the subpersonal cumulative process. From the discussion of pertinent examples Mey proceeds to building 'the pragmatics of interculturality', where 'acts of culture' (culturally embedded *pragmemes*) are the units of study, formed by analogy with speech acts.

The following two contributions discuss various aspects of international English. In 'Formulaic language in English Lingua Franca', Kecskes addresses two questions: (1) how the language is affected by the absence of native speakers in a conversation; and (2) how pragmatic theory can explain this type of conversational interaction. He invokes common ground, mutual knowledge, cooperation, and relevance as pertinent factors to be investigated. The phenomenon is studied in the example of formulaic language, defined as 'multi-word collocations which are stored and retrieved holistically' (p. 193), and exemplified by collocations, lexical metaphors, idioms, and other strongly 'glued' expressions, be it situation-bound or neutrally fixed. Formulaic language is important in communication as it is fast to process, invokes salient scenarios and creates common ground. Kecskes observes, however, that such constructions are not well catered for in post-Gricean pragmatics because they are not compositional and not inferential. As he says, they are like 'frozen implicatures' (p. 197). This is an important point for post-Gricean contextualists from which one should draw theoretical consequences. Firstly, these expressions are not implicatures either, they are primary, most salient, automatically retrieved meanings. Secondly, they are not meanings that can be directly traced to the structure of the uttered expressions, neither do they figure in any enriched, developed, embellished, modulated, etc. logical form. The obvious conclusion is that there is something seriously wrong with the post-Gricean theoretical setup in which what is said/explicit/primary/most salient is to rely so heavily on the enrichment of the output of syntactic processing. And if it is wrong, perhaps we should not shun correcting it

and disposing of the *syntactic constraint* on *what is said*, following the proposal in Default Semantics (e. g. Jaszczolt 2005 & forthcoming). In doing so, we can restore formulaic expressions to their due position of primary rather than implicated meanings. The paper continues with the discussion of the results of data collection from speakers of 8 languages using English Lingua Franca. In spite of the advantages of using processing shortcuts discussed above, Kecskes observed a very scarce use of formulaic expressions: 7.6 per cent of the word total, as compared with perhaps as much as 80 per cent in the native use. The explanation is that non-native speakers make an extended use of language code in that it is the code that has to substitute for other forms of common ground such as the socio-cultural background. He calls such practices ‘egocentric communicative behaviour’ (p. 204) and stresses it as yet another aspect that is misrepresented in post-Gricean research. As he elaborates in Kecskes 2008 in his dynamic model of discourse meaning, the expressions used by the speakers not only *fit* the situation but also *create* it. This evidence provides a lot of food for thought for philosophical debates on speaker- or addressee-centered models of inference (see e.g. Saul 2002). Next, Grundy addresses ‘Language evolution, pragmatic inference, and the use of English as a lingua franca’. Like in the previous contribution, the reliance of non-native speakers on the code is addressed, but now from the perspective of pragmatic inference, which is necessarily predominantly token- rather than type- (culture-, social stereotype-) based. Grundy advocates here a theory of accommodation and suggests that the evolution of English in non-native use is language evolution proper rather than merely a socio-cultural phenomenon. With token-inference, pragmatic processing of discourse is ‘deterritorialized’ and stereotypes and presumptions fade away. Instead of adhering to a standard, speakers *accommodate*. But while the emphasis on the literal is accurate and congenial with Kecskes’ s findings, it must be remembered that non-native users of language do not shun humour, irony, or sarcasm: they just arrive at them in a slightly different, equally ‘deterritorialized’ way. So, perhaps instead of ‘literal vs. nonliteral’, ‘consciously inferred vs. automatic’ proposed in these two papers, we need more precise technical terms for ‘subculturalization’, à la Mey’s *pragmemes*?

In the following paper, ‘On non-reductionist intercultural pragmatics and methodological procedure’, Kristiansen and Geeraerts ardently reject Wierzbicka’s Natural Semantic Metalanguage as an example of a reductionist (in a negative sense) approach to intercultural communication. They oppose the reduction of language to

linguistic structure, the reduction of thought to language, the neglect of intralinguistic variation, as well as her treatment of semantic variation. Wierzbicka's semantic primes do indeed readily yield to critical remarks on various fronts. However, Kristiansen and Geeraerts miss an opportunity in this paper. While assessing Wierzbicka's claims in *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics* (2003) to be weakly substantiated, they do not offer a substantial challenge: they don't offer a better theoretical alternative, neither do they produce strong undermining empirical evidence. The reductionism is indeed there but the truly important task is to show that it is methodologically inadequate. Wierzbicka's exact set of primes may be contentious and her cultural generalizations too sweeping but she uses a respectable research method which has proven to be successful, especially when one's objective is conceptual decomposition and its universal aspects. The section continues with H  l  ne Margerie's 'From downgrading to (over)intensifying: A pragmatic study in English and French'. This is a thoughtful and welcome study in the still underrepresented field of lexical pragmatics, arguing that the English construction *kind of* is developing from a hedge (compromiser) into a booster or a focus marker. *Kind of* is argued to be in the early stages of grammaticalization, analogous to the French hedge (diminisher) *un peu* which is also becoming reinterpreted as a booster. She focuses on the collocations *really kind of* and *un peu grave* and hypothesizes that this grammaticalization is engendered by the juxtaposition with emphatic *really/grave*. Further, she lists other constructions in which these terms occur, giving additional support to the grammaticalization hypothesis. The trigger for the process is arguably the ambiguity between a hedge and a booster function which has to be resolved. This is a commendable analysis, also shedding light on the lexical properties of other interesting items such as *pretty* or *quite*. Last but not least, Terkourafi's 'Toward a universal notion of face for a universal notion of cooperation' imposes a frame structure on the collection by taking up the topic of biological foundations of communication also addressed by Searle. She distinguishes two aspects of face, understood as a public self-image: the biological grounding, which accounts for the values 'approved of' and 'free from imposition', and the intentional aspect. Reallocating and amending somewhat Brown and Levinson's model of communication, she proposes that communicative cooperation is guided by rationality and face so construed. The notion of face is then built into Grice's definition of cooperation, where the mutual awareness of face is now a Gricean 'accepted purpose'

of communication. This theoretical construal owes a lot to previous research on politeness where Grice's maxims of conversation were supplemented with one or another form of general principles of politeness. But it also goes further, in rejecting additional principles of social behaviour and building instead the necessary social aspects of conversation into a richer notion of face. However, the question arises as to what exactly is gained from reinterpreting Grice's Cooperative principle as a principle that subsumes both rationality and face; why can't one simply revise the notion of face and add it to the well delimited and unquestionably functional concept of rationality? There are ready answers out there in sociopragmatics in that, as some of the earlier contributions have demonstrated, situated talk is more important than presumed rules. Further support for a new construct of rational behaviour would have to take this sociopragmatic route, to the benefit of this subdiscipline and perhaps disappointment of those whose trust is in formalizing whatever can be put into precise metalinguistic representations and then saved by a dustbin of irregularities labelled 'society and culture'.

All in all, the 'explorations' live up to the promise in the title: they offer not a specialist morsel but a wide horizon, depicted in most contributions in a precise and principled way – a welcome venture in the times of the compartmentalization of pragmatic research. The papers are thought provoking to various degrees and contentious to various degrees but all are worth reading. The book is also the first volume in a new *Mouton Series in Pragmatics* edited by Istvan Kecskes and a successful springboard for what is to come.

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